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Author's Note

Author's Note

This book is a Super Edition based on Crazystar's Battle and Crazystar's Greatest Challenge. It is the story of Crazystar's friend Salmonstar, your normal RiverClan she-cat.

Hope you enjoy and thank you all so much for reading! I really do appreciate your votes and comments. :D

Allegiances

Allegiances

RIVERCLAN

Leader

Smallstar

Deputy

Troutfin

Medicine Cat

Dawnshine

Apprentice, Leafwhisker

Warriors

Reedsplash

Brightflame

Owlfeather

Moonleaf

Seedstorm

Mosspool

Breezetail

Eaglefeather

Wavestorm

Falconflight

Leopardtooth

Yellowfire

Puddlesplash

Ripplecloud

Amberstorm

Rosethorn

Flash

Lightning

Blizzard

Apprentices

Silverpaw

Hollypaw

Queens

Bluesplash-(nursing Falconflight's kits: Icekit and Hailkit)

Sandfur-(nursing Breezetail's kits: Salmonkit and Foxkit)

Frostcloud-(expecting Mosspool's kits)

Elders

Cinnamon

Sparkle

Grasswhisker

Dustcloud

Prologue

Prologue

A flame-colored she-cat glanced up at the sound of pawsteps. She abandoned the fish she'd been eating and raced over to join a red-furred she-cat who was about to exit the camp.

"Salmonstar, can I come with you?" Tawnyflame asked.

She's very loyal and caring. I've had my doubts about the dream Leafwhisker received but perhaps she'll be a good leader eventually after all.

The RiverClan leader shook her head. "I appreciate the offer, but I just need to be alone right now," Salmonstar replied. "It'll be nice to be hunting again."

"Why don't you just use the stream that surrounds camp? There's some fish there, and you can keep an eye on your kits that way," the RiverClan deputy suggested.

"Icewhisker already agreed to play with them until I return," she responded.

"He's a good father," Tawnyflame commented.

Salmonstar nodded, only partly listening to what Tawnyflame was saying. She pushed her way through the reeds by the riverbank and started swimming across. As she kicked out strongly with her hindlegs, she enjoyed the water soaking into her fur and the minnows brushing by her paws. *I wonder why the other Clans don't like to swim. It's so much fun!*

Salmonstar climbed out on the other side and shook herself to get her fur somewhat dry. She trotted along the river as it widened and stopped when she could see the lake. The stream poured out into the vast expanse of water that separated the Clans

much better than borders ever could.

The RiverClan leader sat down and waited patiently, making sure she wasn't casting a shadow over the water. A small fish passed by, unaware of its predator ready to pounce above. Swift as lightning, Salmonstar brought her paw down into the water and hooked the fish with her claws, tossing it onto the sand next to her. It wriggled, desperately trying to find its way back into the stream. She ended its struggles with a sharp nip to its spine.

The red-furred she-cat had soon caught four fish and was preparing to carry her catch back to camp when she heard a distant high-pitched squeal. Salmonstar instantly dropped her prey and raced towards the voice. "Help! Help! Please somebody!" a young female voice shrieked.

It was coming from the Greenleaf Twolegplace near the ShadowClan border. Salmonstar nearly fainted when she saw a small silver-furred kit inching her way backwards onto the Twoleg half-bridge and a large black-and-white creature staring at the young she-cat with beady black eyes. "Minnowkit!" Salmonstar shouted. "What are you doing out of camp?"

Fortunately, the sound of a new voice distracted the badger temporarily. "I wanted to explore!" the kit wailed. "I'm sorry, please help me!"

"We're coming!" Tawnyflame yelled from somewhere nearby, assuming Minnowkit was talking to her.

You won't be here soon enough. I will hold off the badger. After all, even if I die, I still have six more lives, right?

Salmonstar yowled with fury and launched herself onto the badger's shoulders. It threw her off easily and the RiverClan leader hit the ground hard. She scrambled up and raked her claws across the badger's broad snout. The vicious animal raised a massive forepaw and Salmonstar caught a glimpse of large, sharp, brown claws. The RiverClan leader tried to dodge the blow aimed for her neck, but failed.

She collapsed onto the ground as agony washed over and the last thing she saw was Tawnyflame leading a group of warriors towards the badger. *They will save Minnowkit…*

StarClan warriors appeared around Salmonstar, but they were already starting to flicker and fade. “We’re sorry, Salmonstar, we can’t save you,” their voices all seemed to blend together.

The RiverClan leader glanced around. “What does that mean?” she demanded.

“The wound is too large,” they replied. “We cannot heal you.”

“You mean that…” Salmonstar began to ask the question, already dreading the answer she knew they’d give her.

“Yes. We’re sorry, but you will have to die six more times,” they answered.

Salmonstar was back in Clan territory. The badger was gone. But the terrible agony was not. A spasm passed through her body and she screamed in pain. She could feel her claws tearing up clumps of grass and sensed every cat watching in horror. “What’s wrong?” Minnowkit asked, not understanding what was happening.

Blackness flashed in front of her but quickly dissolved and the scene repeated itself. Sunblaze and Falconflight escorted Minnowkit back to camp. Tawnyflame stayed and crouched beside her dying leader. “No, Salmonstar, you can’t die,” the flame-colored she-cat whispered. “I’m not ready.”

Another shudder passed through Salmonstar’s body and she weakly opened her mouth to speak. “Lead my Clan well…and tell Icewhisker that I’m sorry,” she coughed.

“Salmonstar…” Tawnyflame began to protest.

“It is your destiny,” Salmonstar managed to speak one final time.

She felt her breathing halt again and everything became

dark. And then, it started all over again.

Salmonstar's lungs ached. Her mouth was dry. She was drowning in a river of agony, losing the battle each time. Finally, she found herself back in the fields of StarClan. Sandfur and Foxkit were waiting for her, both sadness and happiness gleaming in their eyes. "Welcome to StarClan, Salmonstar," Sandfur meowed.

A/N: Yes, I decided to do a "Bluestar Beginning" as I like to call it(because of Bluestar's Prophecy's Prologue) :D

Hope you enjoyed, please tell me your thoughts! :D

Chapter 1

Chapter 1

"Tell me a story!" Salmonkit shouted.

Sandfur gently wrapped her tail around Salmonkit and her sister, Foxkit, pulling them closer to her. The young kit breathed in her mother's warm scent and waited for her to respond. "You could ask the elders tomorrow when you're exploring camp," Sandfur purred. "They know lots more stories than me!"

"Why can't we explore camp now? The elders…" Salmonkit started to complain.

"Are sleeping, like just about every other cat," Sandfur finished her sentence. "It's nighttime, you can't go outside right now. Besides, it would be dark."

"We don't care," she muttered through a yawn.

Foxkit looked up. "Go to sleep," Salmonkit's sister grumbled.

"I will," Salmonkit promised. "After Sandfur tells me a story."

Her mother sighed. "Fine," the light brown she-cat gave in. "Your older brother from my first group of kits, Ripplecloud, was born a drypaw…"

"What's that?" Salmonkit asked.

"I was about to explain. A drypaw is a warrior who is afraid of water or has a strong dislike of swimming," Sandfur replied.

"Isn't swimming scary?" Salmonkit wondered aloud. "Aren't the waves strong and can't you drown?"

Sandfur nodded. “But it’s fun and it’s a unique skill no other Clan possesses. That’s why RiverClan is special,” she answered. “But Ripplecloud is scared of water. He absolutely hates swimming. He’s won’t even reach a paw in to catch fish because he’s afraid that he’ll fall in. So when he hunts, he catches land prey that only ThunderClan, ShadowClan, or WindClan would be interested in eating.”

“So we get rid of it?” Salmonkit didn’t understand why they would waste prey.

“No, Ripplecloud will eat it. He never really enjoyed the taste of fish anyways,” Sandfur told her. “Anyhow, most of the time, he’s put on border patrols. But once Troutfin became deputy, she would rarely let him go with the border patrols. The hunting patrols were always annoyed having to listen to his complaining and he would never catch anything. So one day, Silverpaw pushed him in the river.”

This is the good part of the story! “Did he drown?” Salmonkit asked.

Sandfur shook her head. “Owlfeather had to jump in and pull him out,” she continued the story. “My kits, it’s very important to learn how to swim. That’s why I want the first place you explore tomorrow to be Beginner’s Pool.”

“What’s that? Is it part of the stream?” Salmonkit meowed.

“You’ll see,” Sandfur responded. “Now let your sister sleep and get some rest. Tomorrow is a big day.”

Salmonkit lowered her head and fell asleep.

***

Salmonkit went out of the bramble thicket where the nursery was located first, with Foxkit following closely behind.

The camp was on a piece of land that was surrounded by a strange blue surface that seemed to fit Sandfur’s description of

water. There were other bramble thickets and thorn bushes that Salmonkit assumed were where the most of the other dens were. A large stone wall near the nursery with a small gap in it stood out to her. The opening seemed just wide enough for a full-sized warrior to squeeze through. “What’s that?” she asked her mother, pointing to it.

“The warriors den,” Sandfur purred. “You’ll be there soon.”

“Where’s the apprentices den?” Salmonkit wondered.

Sandfur nodded to a thorn bush on the opposite end of camp. “Now let me show you the Beginner’s Pool,” her mother meowed.

“Yes!” Foxkit and Salmonkit shouted in unison.

They followed Sandfur to the center of camp, near a pile of fish and a small amount of land animals. A hole about the width of the smaller stream surrounding the island they were on was filled with water. Salmonkit couldn’t help but feel fear and dread rising up in her stomach. “Salmonkit will go first!” Foxkit announced.

“No, I won’t! Why don’t you go…” her protests were cut off when Foxkit gave her a massive shove and Salmonkit tumbled into the water with a splash.

Salmonkit was shocked by the icy coldness. She could feel the freezing liquid soaking into her fur. She made the mistake of inhaling a mouthful of water and quickly closed her mouth, holding her breath. Her lungs were about to burst and Salmonkit desperately thrashed about as her paws touched the sandy ground at the bottom of the Beginner’s Pool.

Save me, StarClan, please! I’m drowning…

Chapter 2

Chapter 2

Teeth met her scruff and pulled her out. Salmonkit was placed on the ground in front of her mother and instantly collapsed, gasping for air. She could feel her fur slowly starting to shed the water off and rose unsteadily to her paws, shaking herself dry. “Are you okay?” Sandfur asked worriedly.

Salmonkit nodded, still shivering from both fear and the icy water. “Now let’s try again, and I’ll help you this time. And Foxkit, do not push her in!” Sandfur meowed sternly, glaring at her other kit.

Foxkit stared at her paws. “Sorry,” Salmonkit’s sister muttered.

”Okay, so, swimming requires...” Sandfur started to explain.

Salmonkit backed away from the Beginner’s Pool. “No!” she shouted. “I don’t want to do that again!”

“Salmonkit, you’re a member of RiverClan. You won’t be useful if you can’t swim!” her mother protested.

“I hate swimming!” Salmonkit wailed. “I don’t ever want to place a paw in water ever again!”

“You’re just scared. It’ll be okay, I’m right here,” Sandfur tried to soothe her.

“No!” Salmonkit screamed. “I won’t do it!”

“Salmonkit, please try one more time,” the light brown she-cat begged her. “I don’t want you to turn out like Ripplecloud. The biggest mistake I ever made was allowing him not to swim.”

Fine. I'll be brave. I will survive. And after this, I'll never have to swim again.

"Fine," Salmonkit growled. "But after this, when I hate it, I will never swim again."

"You won't hate it," Sandfur promised.

"If I do, I don't ever have to try to swim again. Deal?" Salmonkit offered.

Her mother sighed. "Fine," she agreed. "Okay, swimming is a lot like walking. Just move both of your hindlegs and alternate front paws. Keep moving no matter what! If you fall under the water, turn your body up towards the surface and kick out strongly with your hindlegs."

Salmonkit took a deep breath and then leapt into the water. She sank underneath the surface and remembered Sandfur's advice. She lifted her head and kicked with her hindlegs, surprised to find herself actually heading upwards. Her head came up above the water and Salmonkit started moving her front legs, finding a rhythm. She swam in circles for a while and finally hauled herself out. "That was fun," Salmonkit admitted reluctantly.

"My turn!" Foxkit squealed excitedly. "I'll do better than you, Salmonkit!"

Salmonkit rolled her eyes and watched as Foxkit launched herself into the water. Foxkit started flailing about and screeched in terror as her head dipped below the surface. Salmonkit jumped in and reached underwater. She strained to keep her sister above the water and maintain her steady pace. The young kit was relieved when Sandfur took Foxkit from her jaws and set her down on the grass.

Foxkit's amber eyes were wide with fear. "Who's better than who now?" Salmonkit taunted her sister.

"Salmonkit, that's enough!" Sandfur snapped.

"I don't think I want to try again," Foxkit meowed

hesitantly. “At least not today.”

“Just do what I said and you’ll be fine,” Sandfur comforted her. “Salmonkit did it, so you can too.”

“I’m sorry,” Foxkit whispered. “But I can’t.”

Before Sandfur could respond, Salmonkit dashed forward and knocked her sister back into the Beginner’s Pool. “Revenge is sweet,” Salmonkit told Foxkit as she was about to hit the surface.

“Salmonkit!” Sandfur screamed angrily.

Foxkit managed to kick her way back up to the surface and she tried for a controlled pace with her front paws. It was slower than Salmonkit’s swimming, but at least she didn’t fall back underwater this time.

Foxkit arrived at the edge of the Beginner’s Pool where Salmonkit and Sandfur were watching and reached up with her forepaws. She lost her grip and slipped, but Sandfur quickly grabbed her scruff and hauled her up. “That’s good for today,” Sandfur meowed. “You can do more tomorrow, but nice job!”

“Sandfur?” Salmonkit called her mother’s name. “Can I stay out here and swim a little more?”

Sandfur hesitated. “Fine, but come join us in the nursery soon,” she answered finally.

Salmonkit stared at them as they turned around and padded towards the nursery. She eventually spun around and leapt back into the water, paddling around until she was too exhausted and her legs were too tired to swim any longer.

Chapter 3

Chapter 3

Salmonkit was asleep until Icekit and Hailkit entered the nursery around moonhigh. Her eyes opened instantly as a sharp pain shot up her tail and through her spine. “Ow!” she complained, pulling her tail out from underneath Icekit’s paw.

“Oh, quit whining,” Hailkit snorted, marching over to his mother, Bluesplash.

“Sorry, Salmonkit,” Icekit apologized, and Salmonkit was thinking that he was so being much nicer than Hailkit.

“It’s fine,” she responded.

There was an awkward silence momentarily. “So today was your first time exploring camp?” Icekit asked finally.

Salmonkit nodded. “Yeah,” she replied.

“What did you do?” he continued the conversation.

“Sandfur showed us the Beginner’s Pool,” Salmonkit answered.

“Well, ask her to take you to the elders den tomorrow,” Icekit meowed. “They tell the best stories!”

“Okay,” Salmonkit responded.

“And after that, I’ll teach you to play moss-ball, if you want to,” he offered.

“Sure!” she shouted eagerly.

“Oh c’mon, Icekit, she’ll be terrible at it!” Hailkit protested from across the nursery.

“Well, I can’t be worse than you!” Salmonkit countered.

Hailkit had no response. “Whatever,” he meowed finally. “I don’t need to have a comeback. All I need is the proof I’m going to get tomorrow of who’s actually better than who.”

***

“Sandfur, can you take us to the elders den?” Salmonkit begged her mother.

“It’s right over there,” Sandfur pointed with her tail to the bramble thicket to the right of the nursery. “But you don’t need to go in. You see those four cats lying on that sunny patch of grass right in front of it? Those are the elders. Go over there, be polite, introduce yourselves, and then ask for a story.”

Salmonkit and Foxkit bounced over to the elders eagerly. “Hi, I’m Foxkit, and that’s Salmonkit!” her sister spoke before she could.

The elders purred with amusement. “I’m Dustcloud,” a brown-and-white tom introduced himself.

“I’m Grasswhisker, and I’m his sister,” a silver she-cat meowed.

“My name is Cinnamon, and that’s Sparkle,” a reddish-brown tom meowed and then pointed to a dark gray she-cat with patches of white fur.

“Why do you and Sparkle have such weird names?” Foxkit asked, and Salmonkit was thinking the same thing.

Sandfur rushed over. “Foxkit, stop being rude!” Salmonkit’s mother scolded her sister.

“No, it’s fine,” Cinnamon purred. “Do you want us to tell you a story about that?”

“Yes!” Salmonkit and Foxkit screeched in unison.

“Well, Sparkle and I lived with the same housefolk, what you call Twolegs,” Cinnamon started.

“You were a kittypet? Why would you want to live with Twolegs?” Salmonkit wondered.

“We didn’t,” Sparkle answered for Cinnamon. “Our housefolk always left a window in the kitchen, which is what they call the place where they eat, open.”

“What’s a window?” Foxkit asked.

“It’s an opening in the wall of their den that’s sealed with glass, which is some type of transparent stone, but the glass can be lifted if they want it open,” Cinnamon explained. “Life was boring. Eat dry, tasteless food, take a nap on the couch…”

“What’s a couch?” Salmonkit was confused by all of the Twoleg words.

“It’s a soft thing that Twolegs sit on,” Cinnamon sighed. “But we weren’t enjoying our lives and our housefolk were hardly ever around except at night. So we formed a plan and escaped out of that kitchen window and ran to a nearby barn at the edge of horse-place that sheltered many rogues and runaway kittypets.”

“How did you get here?” Foxkit whispered.

“We heard cats talking about being angry because the lake was owned by four Clans and they couldn’t live there because of that. And they were even more furious because a Clan called RiverClan thought that horse-place was part of their territory. But we asked some questions and decided to go ask if we could join RiverClan,” Cinnamon told the two young kits. “And to our surprise, Smallstar accepted us into the Clan despite everyone else’s protests and we’ve been grateful to him ever since.”

“We had three beautiful kits named Flash, Lightning, and Blizzard. Even Smallstar wasn’t very happy when we refused to give them warrior names but he respected out wishes,” Sparkle finished the story. “And now they’re strong, young warriors. Names do not

change that fact."

"Do you believe in StarClan?" Salmonkit blurted out.

"We didn't until we saw Smallstar lose a life. We thought he was dead and everyone was just acting normal, almost if nothing had happened," Cinnamon replied. "We were so freaked out when all of a sudden, he started breathing. And his words were, 'See? StarClan is real?'"

"When did you become elders?" Foxkit asked.

"About three moons ago," Cinnamon answered.

Hailkit appeared marching towards them with Icekit following behind and carrying a wad of moss. "Moss-ball time!" Icekit declared.

Hailkit narrowed his eyes. "Unless you're too scared," he sneered.

"Never!" Salmonkit shouted. "Just show me how to play and then let's get started!"

A/N: I'm excited for posting Chapter 4, where the moss-ball game happens! Hope you enjoyed, thanks for reading, and may StarClan light your path! :D

Chapter 4

Chapter 4

"Okay, here's how you play. You hit the ball of moss back and forth and try not to let it hit the ground," Icekit explained.

The white-furred kit gently batted the ball of moss to her and she knocked it back. He caught it in his mouth. "Good!" he exclaimed. "The way Hailkit and I play is if you miss a good shot, then you're eliminated. Last cat still in wins."

"What happens if it's a bad shot?" Salmonkit asked.

"Then no one is out," Icekit answered. "Ready? Let's start!"

Icekit looked at Salmonkit but hit it to Hailkit. But Hailkit wasn't caught off guard. He knocked it towards Foxkit, who reached up to hit it back and fell over. The ball landed on the ground as Hailkit laughed. "Foxkit, who's so bad that she couldn't catch greencough, is out, just like that!" Hailkit chuckled.

Icekit grabbed the wad of moss and tossed it in the air. He leaned back and sent it sailing towards Hailkit. Hailkit hit it hard towards Salmonkit, who could tell instantly that it was going way over her head. *But Hailkit will probably cheat and say it was a good shot and I should've gotten it…*

She took a massive leap into the air and felt it touch the top of her paw. It went soaring towards Hailkit, who clearly had been expecting her to miss. He didn't raise a forepaw on time and the moss-ball soared onto the ground in front of him. Salmonkit expected him to complain or accuse her of cheating, but he just gave her a surprised look and joined Foxkit.

Icekit and Salmonkit hit the ball back and forth for a while, neither one of them being able to score. Finally, she reared

back and hit it as hard as she could. Icekit jumped, and but he missed the ball by just a little bit. *I actually won! I actually won! I don't believe it…*

***

Two moons passed. Salmonkit was now eating fresh-kill and she enjoyed the strong, watery flavor of fish more than the sweet and rich flavor of milk. A half-moon ago, Frostcloud's kits, Marshkit and Flowerkit, were born.

Hailkit had been treating Salmonkit with more respect since her victory in her first moss-ball game and often invited her to play with them. Majority of the time though, Foxkit wasn't included in that invitation. She'd usually accept, but occasionally, she'd decline and go swimming in the Beginner's Pool with Foxkit.

Today was one of the days when Hailkit marched over to her nest as soon as Salmonkit was awake. But instead of asking her to play moss-ball, he whispered quietly, "Meet me in the warriors den. No one is in there right now."

"Why?" Salmonkit asked.

"Just do it!" he hissed before soundlessly exiting the den.

Salmonkit's curiosity got the best of her. She crept out of the den, careful not to wake Foxkit, Sandfur, or Frostcloud's kits. She slipped into the warriors den and was surprised to see how big it was. It was at least five times the size of the nursery with lots of mossy nests, some unused. The stone floor was cold to the touch, and the roof of the den above appeared jagged and uneven.

Hailkit stood at the center of den. "See? I was right. Nobody is in here," he purred.

"Why did you want me to come here?" Salmonkit growled, getting straight to the point.

"You may win quite often in moss-ball, but I bet you can't beat me in a fight," Hailkit replied.

Play-fighting? Sandfur told me that was her favorite game as a kit. I guess it couldn't hurt.

"Sure," Salmonkit accepted the challenge.

"No, Salmonkit, I mean a real fight. Claws unsheathed. No moves off-limit except the death blow," Hailkit meowed seriously.

I can't back down now. He'll think I'm scared and he won't let me play with him again.

She lifted her head. "I'm not going to quit just because we're actually going to fight like warriors. And I'm going to beat you!" she declared.

Hailkit unsheathed his claws and Salmonkit nervously did the same. He dashed towards her but Salmonkit stood her ground. *Dodging is for cowards…*

She was shocked as he raked his claws down her cheek and she felt a stinging sensation. She yelped and rolled out of the way before he could strike again. He swiped his claws across her nose, which hurt even worse than the first wound. Salmonkit couldn't help but screech in pain. "Give up yet?" Hailkit meowed, casually licking the blood off of his claws.

"Never!" she snarled.

Salmonkit raced towards him, nearly slipping on the smooth stone floor. She turned as he sidestepped and crashed into him. He staggered but stayed on his feet. She seized the opportunity and leapt onto his back, sinking her claws in to avoid falling off.

Hailkit rolled to try and flatten her beneath him, but Salmonkit quickly jumped off. She placed a paw on his chest before he could roll back onto his belly and climb back to his feet. He squirmed desperately beneath her paws, trying to escape. *Now it's his turn to feel pain! And I won't stop until he gives up!*

Salmonkit raked her claws across Hailkit's stomach a few times, and he screamed. "Give up?" she asked.

"Of course not!" he hissed.

Hailkit heaved himself upwards but Salmonkit clung on. She continued raking her claws across his soft belly. He howled in agony, but refused to admit defeat. His struggles became weaker and weaker. "Stop," he coughed finally.

Hailkit tried to rise to his paws, but his legs buckled underneath him and he collapsed. Salmonkit was horrified. *Did I hurt him that bad? I swear to StarClan, I didn't mean to!*

"Try to stand up again, Hailkit, please," she begged.

He groaned and managed to stand. He nearly lost his balance and fell over, but Salmonkit came over to his right side, supporting his weight. "Lean on me," she panted.

Hailkit was barely able to limp out of the den even with Salmonkit's help. His dark brown fur was stained with blood and was unkempt. "Hailkit! Hailkit!" Bluesplash was screeching desperately.

"Over here!" Salmonkit yelled for him.

Bluesplash instantly rushed over. "What happened?" she wailed. "You look like you were fighting a ShadowClan warrior!"

"I…" Hailkit started to explain.

"And you've got a few nasty wounds on your face too!" Bluesplash noticed, glancing at Salmonkit. "Both of you are going to see Dawnshine right now!"

A/N: Salmonkit almost killed Hailkit, but Hailkit *was* asking for it, kind of. What do you think? :D Please comment and for the billionth time, but I really mean it, I hope you enjoyed!

Chapter 5

Chapter 5

Hailkit's injuries and Salmonkit's wounds were treated and within a couple of days, Hailkit was allowed to return the nursery. Neither one of them would tell how they were hurt, and now the queens were all worried about a fox or badger living in camp.

Fortunately, Hailkit wasn't mad at her. He said it had been his idea anyways and it wasn't her fault that she beat him.

Salmonkit was hiding in a clump of reeds and listening to Silverpaw and Hollypaw take their final assessment. "Remember not to let your shadow fall on the water," Flash told Silverpaw as she sat by the riverbank.

Silverpaw just sat there, unmoving, for a while. Suddenly she brought her left forepaw down into the water, and when it came back up, a wriggling fish was hooked on her claws. She killed it by biting its spine. "Good job!" Flash praised his apprentice. "Now we'll go to the lake shore to test your battle skills."

As soon as they were gone, Salmonkit emerged from the reeds and sat by the riverbank. She saw her shadow on the water and saw the fish moving away, so she leaned back. She raised a forepaw and waited. A fish swam by and she dipped her paw into the water. She felt soft flesh against her claws and she was unhappy when she accidentally lost her grip. She watched with dismay as it slipped back into the water.

Salmonkit tried again. This time, when she pounced, she brought her paw up quicker and swiftly gave it a nip to its spine. "Great catch!" a voice shouted.

Salmonkit spun around, feeling pride and excitement. Foxkit was trotting towards her with Marshkit and Flowerkit

following behind. “Where did you learn that?” Flowerkit asked.

“I watched Silverpaw catch one on her final assessment,” Salmonkit admitted. “But it’s still pretty good! It’s not like Flash came over and gave me a lesson or instructions!”

“Let me try!” Foxkit shouted.

She waded into the water until it was up to her shoulders. “All of the fish are avoiding me!” she complained.

She reached out with a paw and tried grab one, but fell over and tumbled into the water. She stood up and shook her head to get the water out of her ears. “Oh, c’mon!” she protested.

“Give up, Foxkit,” Salmonkit purred.

“Fine,” Foxkit sighed. “Why don’t we do something fun instead?”

“Okay, hold on, I’ll be right back. Please don’t start any games without me!” Salmonkit meowed and then picked up her fish.

She marched back to camp. “Sandfur!” she yowled. “Come see what I caught!”

Sandfur came over. “Did you catch that yourself?” the light brown she-cat asked, looking impressed.

Salmonkit nodded. “Well, put it on the fresh-kill pile then!” Sandfur meowed with warmth in her voice.

Salmonkit lifted her head with pride and padded over to the fresh-kill pile. She dropped her catch and heard her father, Breezetail, shout, “Good job, Salmonkit!”

Salmonkit raced back to join Flowerkit, Marshkit, and Foxkit. “I dare you to swim across the stream, Foxkit!” Marshkit challenged her sister.

Why doesn’t he dare me to do it? I’m twice as good at

swimming as Foxkit!

"All right!" Foxkit shouted.

The red-furred she-cat tensed her muscles and jumped into the water. She instantly disappeared underwater but reappeared for a heartbeat in the middle of the stream, struggling to stay above water. "Yeah! Keep going!" Marshkit called encouragingly.

She's not going to make it.

Salmonkit was proved to be correct when Foxkit's nose vanished beneath the water's surface again. She summoned her courage and leapt in after her sister. The currents were much stronger than those in the Beginner's Pool, so Salmonkit put more energy into her kicks. A small wave came and washed over her muzzle and she was pushed underwater. She made her way back up and resurfaced, gasping for breath. She continued on and saw a flash of red fur beneath her.

Salmonkit ducked under the water and grabbed Foxkit's scruff, noticing instantly that her sister was limp in her jaws. But between the river's pull and Foxkit's weight, she couldn't maintain her smooth rhythm. She had no choice but to come up for air. "Help! Please, someone, help!" Flowerkit and Marshkit were shrieking.

Salmonkit prepared to dive down for another attempt. "No, Salmonkit!" Flowerkit shouted. "Get back here! You can't drown too! Warriors are coming to help!"

Salmonkit ignored her friend and took a deep breath. Her lungs were already screaming for oxygen as she sank her teeth into her sister's scruff again and tried to kick upwards. But it wasn't working. They were both drifting slowly down, farther away from the cats above. *Flowerkit is right. This is hopeless.*

She reluctantly let go of her sister and paddled back to the surface. She swam back towards Marshkit and Flowerkit and reached it just as Sandfur, Rosethorn, and Amberstorm dashed

through the reeds. Sandfur quickly hauled Salmonkit up and she collapsed onto the ground. “I’m not the problem!” Salmonkit wheezed. “Foxkit is drowning!”

Sandfur was instantly alert and alarmed. She jumped into the water with Rosethorn following while Amberstorm went to get Dawnshine.

The two warriors disappeared underwater and came up carrying an unmoving Foxkit in their jaws. Dawnshine rushed to the scene and tried to get Salmonkit’s sister to cough up some water, but it didn’t work. The elderly RiverClan medicine cat looked up with sadness in her eyes. “I’m sorry, Sandfur, but we were too late. Foxkit is dead,” she announced and Salmonkit felt her heart shatter.

A/N: Foxkit is dead! :(What do you think? Hope you liked this chapter even though it's sad :D

Chapter 6

Chapter 6

Salmonkit was hardly listening when Smallstar called, “Let all cats old enough to catch their own prey gather around the RiverTree for a Clan meeting!”

Salmonkit turned around, not wanting to go. Sandfur didn’t move away from Foxkit’s lifeless body either. But Troutfin picked Salmonkit up by the scruff and set her down underneath the large tree overhanging the river. “What happened today was a tragedy,” Smallstar began. “But we are RiverClan. Life must go on. And that’s why I’ve chosen now as the time to perform this ceremony.”

“Icekit, Hailkit, step forward,” the RiverClan leader instructed. “Icekit, from now until you receive your warrior name, you will be known as Icepaw. Seedstorm, you had a great mentor in Mosspool. I hope you pass on all you know to Icepaw.”

“Hailkit, from this moment on until you receive your warrior name, you will be known as…” Smallstar’s voice faded as Salmonkit managed to sneak away without Troutfin noticing.

Salmonkit found her father in the crowd. “Breezetail,” she whispered.

He spun around, and his eyes were cold as he stared at her. “It’s your fault,” he hissed. “You could’ve saved her!”

Salmonkit flinched back, the pain in her heart increasing. “Mommy!” she wailed.

“Shut up!” Breezetail growled fiercely.

Salmonkit turned and fled. She skidded to a halt next to Sandfur, who had her nose buried in Foxkit’s fur. “Sandfur,

Breezetail says…" she began.

"I don't want to play any dumb games with you," Sandfur snarled.

"But that's not what…" Salmonkit started.

"Go away and leave me alone, you useless furball," Sandfur muttered.

Salmonkit could hardly believe how her parents were treating her. *Nobody wants me here…I'm not important…*

She closed her eyes and padded miserably into the nursery.

***

Salmonkit had a dream. There was a patch of land surrounded on all sides by hills except for a distant Twolegplace to her right. A stream cut through the center of the valley and she could see the abundant amount of fish in it. "This is the place you must find," a voice in the wind meowed. "It is your destiny. It is the only way for you and your parents to ever realize where your heart truly lies."

"What do you mean?" Salmonkit asked.

Is this a sign from StarClan? I mean, I've already thought about it of course, but are even my warrior ancestors telling me I'm not wanted here? That leaving is actually the right answer?

***

Salmonkit woke up at the sound of pawsteps. Sandfur was entering the nursery as the sun was just now appearing in the sky. Her mother intentionally climbed into a nest at the opposite end of the nursery from where Salmonkit was sleeping. Both Frostcloud and Bluesplash gave her sympathetic looks.

Foxkit was the only one who will ever matter to her. She doesn't care about me…

Salmonkit padded out of the nursery and glanced over her shoulder, but Sandfur didn't even look up. She padded slowly across the camp. Breezetail was returning with the dawn patrol and he intentionally gave her a shove as he walked by. She stumbled but quickly regained her balance, and kept moving.

Salmonkit pushed her way through the reeds separating her from the stream that had taken her sister's life.

The young kit swam across the river without any trouble, numbly paddling to the other side. Her heart was already filled with regret and she wasn't able to resist the desire to look back. The camp looked so peaceful, with warriors waking and marching out of their den, stretching in the sunlight. Foxkit's body was being carried away by the elders. Owlfeather told the newly named Silvershine and Hollystorm that their long vigil was finally completed. Smallstar emerged from the bramble thicket that belonged to all RiverClan leaders and went over to speak with Troutfin about patrols. But Salmonkit could see that she wasn't missed. She wouldn't be missed even when they realized she was gone, gone for good. That knowledge weighed her down and made her paws seem heavier. *I'm not needed…*

She lowered her head and forced herself to keep walking away from all she'd ever known…

A/N: Salmonkit is running away from RiverClan! What do you think? :D Hope you enjoyed!

Sandfur and Breezetail were SOOOOOOOOOOO MEAN! (Taylor Swift's song "Mean" starts playing in the background and all the she-cats in the ThunderClan camp start fighting about whether Taylor Swift is amazing or terrible and a gigantic prey-fight starts sorry about this being so random lol) :D

Chapter 7

Chapter 7

RiverClan's territory felt small, almost too small. She felt that way because she'd made it to horse-place by sunhigh.

Salmonkit paused at the border. She inhaled the scent of RiverClan one last time and stared at the Twoleg structures beyond. She had originally intended on going to the "barn" that Cinnamon had talked about, but was worried that RiverClan might search for her there.

Horse-place was filled with strange animals that Salmonkit thought only existed in the elders' stories. Animals called sheep looked like fluffy, white clouds and cows were black-and-white and made a deep sound that scared Salmonkit the first time she heard it. There were pigs, bright pink animals with no fur. And most frequently, there were large Twoleg structures often containing horses, dry grass that Cinnamon called "hay", or in unused "barns", there was the scent of loners.

Salmonkit passed through another field of cows, who were peacefully grazing. She pushed her way through some bushes at the end of it and felt smooth stone beneath her paws. She jumped back and trembled with fear as a massive creature with spinning black paws, an unnatural shiny pelt, and a really loud growl came towards her. *It's moving way faster than any cat could! And it's so big! I didn't think monsters and Thunderpaths were real!*

Salmonkit tensed her muscles and looked both ways. She dashed across the path and almost instantly, a monster was bearing down on her. She ran harder, feeling the hard stone scraping her pads. Desperately, she took a gigantic leap and waited for the pain of the monster crashing into her. It never came. She collapsed onto the grass at the side of the Thunderpath and felt the wind ruffle her fur as the monster rushed by her.

Salmonkit waited until she'd regained her breath and climbed back to her aching paws. She didn't want to eat land prey and she didn't know how to catch it either, but her belly was growling nearly as loud as the monsters. She sniffed the ground hesitantly, but could scent nothing other than the stench of the monster.

Another Thunderpath soon appeared, and Salmonkit did not want to risk crossing it again. *I'll follow it along the side…but which way will I go? Well, I guess when in doubt, you head towards the sun.*

Salmonkit turned to her left, where an orange ball of flame was sinking through the sky. She walked until the moon was high above her and finally decided to rest. She turned away from the Thunderpath, knowing she'd never be able to rest with the constant roaring of monsters passing by.

Salmonkit stopped at the entrance to the forest. *I wish I could sleep on an island near a river…then maybe it would feel more like home.*

Salmonkit had an appreciation for trees, and they were fun to climb as long as you were careful and didn't go too high, but these trees were too close together. The leaves high above her head made her uncomfortable because they blocked almost all of the moon's light and she couldn't see her warrior ancestors shining brightly in the night sky. She was disappointed to be stopping, but she knew she'd made good progress. *I'm far away from Clan territory, where no cat would think of searching for me. I made it through horse-place. And tomorrow, no matter what, I will find a river.*

She pulled some moss off of a tree and placed it between the giant oak's roots. A cold breeze made her shiver and she couldn't help but think about how much warmer RiverClan's nursery was. *It was only warm when Sandfur was sleeping there and Foxkit was next to me. Now Foxkit is dead and Sandfur hates me.*

Salmonkit closed her eyes and settled down in her temporary nest. The last thing she thought about before she drifted into sleep was that she'd always miss the sound of the river, even

though it was the right choice to leave.

***

Salmonkit looked up through a small gap in the leaves above and was dismayed to realize it was already sunhigh when she woke up. She quickly scrambled up and set out towards the distant noise of the Thunderpath. She breathed a sigh of relief when she was out of the forest, and she had no intentions of looking back.

Very shortly after the forest disappeared behind her, Salmonkit could see that the Thunderpath was leading to a cluster of small Twoleg dens surrounded by “fences” and a small patch of land. She took a deep breath and tried to imagine living there permanently. *It’ll only be a short time. I’m just traveling through it.*

Salmonkit had reached a Twolegplace.

A/N: What do you think of Salmonkit's journey so far? :D

As always, hope you enjoyed and thank you so much for reading and being super awesome! :)

Chapter 8

[image]

Chapter 8

Salmonkit wandered around, confused by the identical Twoleg dens, strange scents, and loud sounds. The occasional monster would pass by, but the monsters in the Twolegplace seemed slower and less frequent. Her belly rumbled but she couldn't find any prey. *I'm so hungry…I hope I reach a river soon.*

Salmonkit nearly jumped out of her fur when a voice from above shouted, "Hi!"

She looked up to see a fat light brown she-cat sitting on top of a fence. The cat looked about her age, perhaps slightly older. "Um, hi," she offered.

"What's your name?" the kittypet asked. "I haven't seen you around before!"

"Salmonkit," the young kit answered. "What's your name?"

"Rainbow, but all my friends just call me Rain or Rainy," the strange cat replied. "Where do you live?"

"I'm not a kittypet," Salmonkit meowed hurriedly.

Rainbow tilted her head to one side. "What's a kittypet?" she asked curiously.

"A cat that lives with Twolegs, you know, big, tall, creatures with no fur," Salmonkit responded, already walking again.

I don't want to waste time talking to a spoiled kittypet.

Rainbow leapt down from her fence and started walking alongside her. "Where do you come from then?" she asked.

"I used to live with the Clans, a long way from here," Salmonkit sighed, wishing the kittypet would leave her alone. "But I left because no one liked me."

"Oh, I've heard of the Clans! I thought they were just legends that my mother made up! And how do you know that nobody liked you?" Rainbow asked. "I mean, maybe one cat didn't, but…"

Salmonkit halted and spun around, shoving her nose in Rainbow's face. "Has your father ever accused you of causing your sister's death? Has your mother ever intentionally left you to sleep alone in the cold?" she demanded. "No, of course they haven't. Or else you wouldn't be so talkative."

The kittypet sensed Salmonkit's anger. "Sorry, I didn't know. I didn't mean to upset you," she meowed quietly.

"Why are you still following me?" Salmonkit asked, quickening her pace.

Rainbow shrugged. "Because I like meeting new cats, I guess," she answered, also moving faster to keep up with Salmonkit.

Rainbow continued to walk next to Salmonkit as they crossed another empty Thunderpath. "How can you stand being a kittypet?" she wondered.

Rainbow stared at the ground. "I can't," she admitted. "It's so boring and the food is awful. But I wouldn't be able to survive in the wild. And how would I learn before I died? I may live with housefolk, but I understand survival."

"I could teach you to hunt and stuff!" Salmonkit blurted out before she could stop herself.

Rainbow's eyes widened. "Really?" she whispered excitedly.

Oh, great StarClan, what have I gotten myself into? Should I just say I was joking around?

But Salmonkit was lonely and she did want company. Rainbow might be a kittypet, but it was still better to have her around than to be all alone. “Yes, on one condition,” she replied. “Can you find me a river?”

“Of course!” Rainbow purred. “There’s one on the other end of Twolegplace!”

“Can you take me there?” Salmonkit asked.

“Yes!” Rainbow shouted. “Let’s go!”

Rainbow led the way, crossing countless Thunderpaths, jumping over fences and walking through some Twolegs’ territory. Salmonkit was nervous about walking so close to a Twoleg den, but she didn’t want the kittypet to know.

By sunset, she was starting to wonder if Rainbow actually knew where she was going or if she had just been bluffing so that Salmonkit would let her come. “Here’s the street we need to follow towards those hills in the distance!” she declared.

The “street” as Rainbow called Thunderpaths looked just the same as all of the rest of them. A lone monster passed by. Salmonkit was yawning with tiredness and her paws ached from walking so far. But suddenly, she heard the faint sound of rushing water and new energy flooded through her. She couldn’t keep herself from running at top speed towards the noise, and Rainbow, as unfit as she was, quickly fell behind.

Salmonkit reached a tall Twoleg barrier with a gap in it. She squeezed through and on the other side, the ground sloped downwards towards a river. Hills were in all directions, and the moon’s glow reflected off of the water. Rainbow stared at her as she happily jumped in the water, splashing around.

Salmonkit climbed out and shook her fur dry. She sat on the bank and waited, looking down at the water. She quickly reached down with a paw and brought a small fish out of the river, swiftly killing it with a nip to its spine. Rainbow glanced longingly towards it. *The kittypet probably hasn’t gone even a quarter of a day*

without food before.

Salmonkit tossed the fish to her companion and caught another for herself shortly after.

Lying on her back on the soft grass, staring at Silverpelt above with Rainbow fast asleep beside her, and resting with her hunger finally satisfied, this place almost felt like home. *But nothing will ever feel the same…because that life is gone.*

A/N: Quick! Someone! Look at the multimedia! :D

The last few times I've given everybody a link and I guess no one wanted to have to type it in(can't blame you though) :D So I put a picture of Salmonstar as multimedia this time. Please comment about it, someone, I don't care if you say it's terrible as long as you remember I'm an author, not an artist! :) How about pretty please with a cherry on top?

Also, let me know what you think of the chapter! :D This is the first time a character in one of my Warrior fanfics has left the Clan territory, and I hope you like it! Sorry for bothering you with this long of a note, and may StarClan light your path!

Chapter 9

Chapter 9

"Why don't you catch prey on land?" Rainbow asked.

"We're RiverClan," Salmonkit explained patiently. "We swim and eat the prey we catch from the water and that's what makes us special in the eyes of StarClan."

"What's StarClan?" Rainbow wondered.

Salmonkit was stunned. *I knew rogues and kittypets didn't believe in StarClan, but I thought they knew what StarClan is.* "You don't know what StarClan is, Rainbow?" she gasped in shock. "Well, you see stars in the night sky? Those are the Clans' warrior ancestors. They watch over us and give our medicine cats prophecies that help guide us in times of trouble. And they give each Clan leader nine lives."

"Just call me Rain, please," the runaway kittypet meowed. "And anyhow, can you teach me to catch fish then?"

"Sure," Salmonkit answered. "First, you should probably learn how to swim in case you fall in."

"Okay," Rain responded.

Salmonkit led her down to the stream. "Back in our camp, we have a small hole filled with water where we train kits to swim. But I guess we have to teach you in a real stream," she started the lesson.

"What happens if I can't swim though and I start drowning?" Salmonkit's new friend worried.

Salmonkit took a deep breath. She could still see her sister's nose disappearing underwater and still hear Marshkit and Flowerkit screaming for help in her head. "Then I'll jump in and

save you. It's okay, I won't let what happened to Foxkit happen to you," her voice quivered when she said her sister's name.

"Who's Foxkit and what happened to her?" Rain wondered.

Too late, Salmonkit realized Rain didn't know anything about Foxkit. "Nothing. Let's just swim!" she replied quickly.

Rain narrowed her eyes. "I have a brain, you know," she growled. "Just tell me!"

Salmonkit sat down and took a deep breath. "Foxkit is my sister," she began shakily. "And she drowned trying to swim across the river surrounding our camp. I tried to save her but…I couldn't. And Breezetail, my father, was right. It's my fault she died."

"Did you push her in? Was it your idea for her to do it?" Rain asked, and Salmonkit shook her head to both questions. "Did you do everything you could to try to save her?"

"Of course!" Salmonkit screamed angrily. "Why wouldn't I?"

The former kittypet looked into her eyes. "Then it's not your fault," she finished. "Now how do you swim?"

"Just move your legs strongly like you're running," Salmonkit replied.

"Okay," Rain meowed. "Can I watch you swim first?"

"Of course," she responded.

Salmonkit took a giant leap into the stream, quickly making her way back up to the surface. The currents didn't bother her at all because all she had to do was put a little extra power into her kicking. She swam back and forth for a while and finally climbed out. "Now you try. I bet you'll do fine," she purred encouragingly.

Rain hesitantly placed a forepaw in the water and then jumped in. She stayed above the water for a few moments but suddenly lost her rhythm. She flailed around desperately. “Salmonkit! Help!” she screeched before her head vanished beneath the water.

Salmonkit felt a wave of panic. *Great StarClan, no! Please don’t let Rain die too!*

She instantly leapt into the water after her friend. She inhaled as much air as she possibly could and then ducked underwater. She saw Rain drifting slowly towards the sandy bottom of the stream, which didn’t appear to be as deep as the one in RiverClan. She grabbed the former kittypet’s scruff, and struggled to make her way back up. Her lungs needed oxygen and she was starting to feel dizzy. *Can’t let go…can’t let Rain die too…*

Just as Salmonkit was certain she wouldn’t reach the surface in time and that she was going to drown with Rain, teeth met her scruff and pulled her up. A white-furred she-cat with a long scar across her face placed them on the ground. “Thanks,” Salmonkit meowed.

“No problem. What are two young kittens like you doing out here? You’re lucky I saw you two from the forest up there,” the loner meowed, pointing to a hill to their right. “Oh, and by the way, the name’s Snowflake. Snow is the nickname.”

“We both left our homes and we want to live here,” Salmonkit explained, not looking away from her unmoving friend.

“Well, good luck. You’re quite young to be living on your own. If you need any help again, just say my name! Make sure you say it in a somewhat loud voice though,” Snowflake told the young kit before leaving.

“Bye!” Salmonkit called.

She stared at the brown-furred she-cat. Rain wasn’t breathing. *No! Rain is the one cat I had left…*

“Rain! Are you okay?” Salmonkit shouted desperately.

Rain didn’t respond…

A/N: What do you think everybody? :D It feels like Foxkit all over again, except I know it's not quite the same, you'll see what I mean pretty soon...

Chapter 10

Chapter 10

Salmonkit remembered what Dawnshine had done to try to save Foxkit. She placed her paws on Rain's chest and pushed down hard. *Please StarClan, let this work…*

A shudder suddenly passed through Rain's body and she coughed up a mouthful of water. Salmonkit breathed a sigh of relief.

The former kittypet's eyes opened. "Salmonkit, are you…" Rain began to speak weakly.

"I'm here," Salmonkit meowed. "Are you okay?"

Rain rose to her paws and nodded. "Thanks to you," she purred. "You were so brave."

"No, thanks to Snowflake. She pulled both of us out," Salmonkit told her.

"Who's Snowflake?" Rain asked.

"A loner who rescued us when she saw us drowning," Salmonkit replied. "Now you were doing fine for a little while, what happened?"

"I stopped doing what you said for a moment and then I felt myself start to sink beneath the water. So I just freaked out," Salmonkit's friend answered.

"Would you want to try again?" she offered hesitantly.

"Yeah, I'll be fine as long as I keep following your advice," Rain replied.

I would've understood if she said no. She's braver than I

thought. I just hope she's okay this time.

"All right. Be careful!" Salmonkit warned her.

Rain nodded and jumped in. Salmonkit watched nervously. "Good job!" she called.

Rain was swimming strongly. She climbed after a long time and shook herself to get dry. "That was fun!" she exclaimed. "It's really simple as long as I keep moving my paws, like you said!"

"Now I'll teach you how to catch fish," Salmonkit meowed and Rain listened eagerly.

***

Rain was like a littermate to Salmonkit.

Salmonkit taught her games and soon every day, they were playing moss-ball, swimming, or play-fighting. Rain was so understanding and fun, and she helped to slowly ease the pain of Foxkit's death.

Time passed. Salmonkit was old enough to be an apprentice, that is, if she still lived with RiverClan.

"Could you tell me about the camp?" Rain asked at nighttime one day.

"Oh, the camp was beautiful. It was on an island surrounded by stream, with bramble thickets and thorn bushes as dens, except for the warriors den. The warriors den was inside of a stone wall. There was one tree where Smallstar would call a Clan meeting from, and it was called the RiverTree," Salmonkit remembered. "I've told you about the Beginner's Pool. It was in the center of camp next to a pile of fish known as the fresh-kill pile. The nursery was small but…"

"When you talk about your old life, you sound like you miss it," Rain interrupted. "I think you liked living in RiverClan. Why don't you go back?"

“First of all, I’m not sure that they’ll take me back,” Salmonkit started.

“Think about it, Salmonkit. If I know you at all, I know that deep down inside of you, your heart still lies with RiverClan,” Rain meowed.

Rain rested her head on the ground and fell asleep but Salmonkit was still awake. *I could be an apprentice, and later a warrior. I could defend my Clan, learn battle moves, and live in the camp. Maybe one day, I might even be leader or deputy!*

So by the next morning, Salmonkit had made her decision.

“Rain, I’m returning to RiverClan,” she announced.

Rain nodded. “I knew you would eventually,” Salmonkit’s friend purred.

“But only if you’re coming with me,” Salmonkit added.

Rain stood up. “Of course! Now let’s hunt while we’re still here, because we probably won’t be able to catch anything on the journey.”

A/N: So Salmonkit is returning to RiverClan and Rain is coming with her! What do you think? :D (Oh, and yay, Rain didn't die!)

Chapter 11

Chapter 11

Salmonkit approached the Twolegplace for the first time in moons. "Are you sure you can remember how to get through here?" she whispered to Rain.

Rain looked at her but didn't stop walking. "Can you remember the RiverClan camp and stuff?" she asked and Salmonkit nodded. "Well, I can remember how to navigate through this town."

"Town" was Rain's word for Twolegplace. Rain led her along the Thunderpath for a while and both cats maintained a brisk pace. Salmonkit was anxious to reach horse-place at least before they rested.

The Twolegplace was as confusing as ever with the small Twoleg dens and multiple Thunderpaths. A barking dog made Salmonkit jump. "Don't worry, it's chained to that tree," Rain whispered.

Salmonkit guessed that Rain was referring to the Twoleg thing wrapped around its neck. But it wasn't very reassuring when she looked at the massive beast with its sharp yellow fangs showing. She hurried on.

Rain had no trouble finding her way through the Twolegplace and they were soon following the Thunderpath towards her old home. Salmonkit wasn't certain that they were walking in the right direction until she saw the forest. The moon was just rising. "Rain! That's the forest I stayed in before I arrived at Twolegplace!" Salmonkit shouted excitedly.

"Should we stop there for tonight?" Rain suggested. "I know you want to keep moving, but it's nighttime and it might be a good idea to get some sleep."

Salmonkit shook her head. Tiredness wasn't affecting her. "I think if

we keep going, we'll make it there by sunhigh tomorrow," she meowed, walking even faster despite her aching paws.

Rain sighed but followed her anyways. The Thunderpath seemed to go on forever. Salmonkit stopped when just a little past moonhigh she suddenly saw tall Twoleg structures to her right. "It's horse-place!" she screamed, running towards it.

She slowed down at the Thunderpath, but not as many monsters were crossing it this time. "Run across when I tell you to," she ordered.

Rain gave a quick nod. A monster rushed by and Salmonkit yelled, "Now!"

They dashed across safely and continued on into horse-place. Salmonkit could faintly smell the lake on the breeze and she followed its scent. She stopped when she recognized a big red "barn" that she knew was directly behind the field leading to the RiverClan border.

New energy rushed through her paws and Salmonkit found herself running at top speed. "Wait for me!" Rain yowled, and she slowed slightly to let her friend catch up.

The wonderful smell of the RiverClan scent markers filled her nostrils. The sun was rising, painting the sky in a beautiful mixture of orange, yellow, and pink. Salmonkit crossed the border without hesitation. *I'm finally home.*

"Stop!" a voice suddenly shouted. "What are you worthless rogues doing trespassing on RiverClan territory?"

Salmonkit skidded to a halt and looked up to see an angry Mosspool leading a patrol towards them. "Hello, Mosspool. That's not a polite way to greet an old friend!" she purred, knowing they didn't recognize her. "Hi, Ripplecloud. Still a drypaw, I assume? And Marshkit...no, Marshpaw. You look bigger than the last time I saw you."

Mosspool looked bewildered. "How do you know our names?" he

growled suspiciously. "And who in StarClan's name are you?"

"Who am I? I'm a cat," she chuckled, knowing that response would seriously annoy Mosspool.

Marshpaw's eyes suddenly widened. "No, it can't be her," he whispered. "Is your name Salmonkit?"

"Yes," Salmonkit replied.

"Welcome back!" Marshpaw and Ripplecloud meowed at the same time.

"Every cat thought you were dead or at least gone for good. I guess I'll take you back to camp, but who is she?" Mosspool demanded, looking at Rain.

"A friend," Salmonkit growled. "Now take us to Smallstar."

All three cats exchanged glances. "Smallstar is dead," Ripplecloud spoke finally. "Troutstar became leader three moons ago."

Salmonkit bowed her head. "I'm sorry, I didn't know," she apologized. "Who's deputy?"

"Me," Mosspool snarled. "Now let's get going."

A/N: I am a very happy author!Salmonkit has officially returned to RiverClan! :D

Chapter 12

Chapter 12

Sandfur was staring at a small, uneaten fish in front of her. Her eyes were distant and her fur was matted, looking as if it was in desperate need of grooming. She looked up momentarily when Mosspool led Salmonkit and Rain into camp. “Great,” she muttered. “Just what RiverClan needs. More rogues joining.”

I thought my own mother would recognize me!

“Troutstar!” Mosspool shouted.

Troutstar emerged from the large bramble thicket that now belonged to her. “Who are you?” she asked them.

“My name is Rain,” Salmonkit’s friend answered.

Troutstar’s eyes turned towards Salmonkit. “Your friend seems familiar for some reason,” the RiverClan leader commented. “What is her name?”

Before Rain could answer, she replied, “Salmonkit.”

Sandfur’s eyes widened and her face brightened. Before Salmonkit could back away, her mother rushed over and was covering her fur with happy licks.

As soon as Sandfur finally decided to step back, Breezetail marched over and glared at her. “Why did you come back?” he hissed.

The Clan gasped in shock but Salmonkit had been prepared for this. She’d expected Sandfur to give her the same welcome though. “Because I realized the rest of my Clan is better than you,” she snarled, meeting his angry blue eyes.

“Breezetail, how could you talk to your kit that way?”

Troutstar spat. “Get away from her! If you say another word to her that sounds anything like that, you’re back on apprentice duties for a moon! And you’ll be lucky if I still let you come to the Gathering with us tonight!”

“I’m a senior warrior! You can’t…” Breezetail started to protest.

“I’m leader and I can do anything I like as long as it’s within the boundaries of the warrior code!” she growled.

Breezetail spun around furiously and padded out of camp.

Hailpaw, who was probably a warrior by now, dashed over. “I can’t believe you missed my naming ceremony!” he shouted, but Salmonkit could tell he was teasing.

“Hailcloud, stop it,” Troutstar ordered. “I highly doubt that Salmonkit is in the mood for jokes.”

“No, it’s fine,” she purred. “Troutstar, I’m sorry for leaving. I promise that…”

“I don’t think any cat blames you, not when your parents treat you like that,” Troutstar interrupted, glaring at Breezetail, who had just re-entered the camp. “We’ll most certainly let you stay, but who is…”

Salmonkit stiffened. “A friend. If she leaves, I leave,” she growled.

“Calm down! I have to ask. For all I know, she could be a hostile rogue! What’s her name?” Troutstar asked.

“Rain,” Salmonkit responded.

“Rain, do you want to become an apprentice by the name of Rainpaw and join RiverClan? Do you promise to be loyal to this Clan and to learn our ways?” Troutstar meowed.

Rain nodded. Troutstar padded across the island and

leapt onto one of the lower branches of the RiverTree. “Let all cats old enough to catch their own prey gather beneath the RiverTree for a Clan meeting!” she yowled.

“Follow me,” Salmonkit whispered, leading Rain to sit directly under the giant tree.

“Rain, from this moment on, you will be known as Rainpaw. Your mentor will be Flashfur,” Troutstar began. “I expect Flashfur to pass on…”

“Flashfur?” Salmonkit couldn’t help but blurt out. “Since when has Flash been called Flashfur?”

“I’ll explain it to her later,” Hailcloud meowed before Troutstar spoke.

Troutstar nodded. “Please, no more interruptions, Salmonkit. Anyhow, I hope Flashfur passes on all that he knows to Rainpaw just as he did with Silvershine.”

It’s my turn now!

“Salmonkit, from this moment on, you will be known as Salmonpaw. Icewhisker, you have not yet had an apprentice. I believe that my deputy, Mosspool, taught you a lot and I expect you to share it with Salmonpaw,” Troutstar finished.

Icewhisker briefly touched noses with her and he looked almost as excited as she was. “Get some rest, as I assume you and Rainpaw had a long journey, and we can train tomorrow,” the white-furred tom told her.

Hailcloud walked over as the rest of RiverClan called their names. “I wish I was your mentor. I bet you’d be the best apprentice ever,” he sighed. “But anyways, Troutstar insisted that Flash and Blizzard needed warrior names. Flash is Flashfur and Blizzard is Blizzardfrost.”

“What is a blizzard?” Salmonpaw wondered.

“It’s a Twoleg word for a massive snowstorm. At least I

think that's what Cinnamon said," Hailcloud replied.

"And what's Lightning's new name?" she asked.

Hailcloud's eyes darkened with sadness. "Lightning was killed by the same dog that took Smallstar's last life," he answered.

"Is the dog gone?" Salmonpaw meowed nervously.

Hailcloud nodded. "A patrol sent it running back to its Twolegs," he responded as he started walking towards the warriors den.

So much has happened since I left. But I'm just excited to be back and relieved that Troutstar accepted me back into the Clan.

Chapter 13

Chapter 13

Salmonpaw woke up just after her Clanmates had left for the Gathering. *I wish I was going…*

Icewhisker had stayed behind. “So what’s the Gathering like? How big is the tree-bridge? What’s the Great Oak like? What will Troutstar have to report for this moon? Is the island crowded or not? Are the other Clans rude?” Salmonpaw asked all of these questions excitedly.

“Great StarClan, Salmonpaw, I don’t remember you talking so loud before! I’m guessing most cats will think you’re noisy and annoying!” he purred.

She ignored his remark. “Can we train? Please?” she begged him.

“Yes, but only in camp. We’ll go to the Training Shore tomorrow,” Icewhisker responded. “We can train with Coldpaw and Aspenpaw right now if you want.”

Salmonpaw nodded. “Sounds good! But could we do hunting instead of fighting?” she asked.

Icewhisker hesitated. “Aspenpaw prefers hunting but Coldpaw likes fighting and I don’t want those two arguing with each other again. But I guess it’s fine,” he responded before calling the two apprentices’ names.

“You’re Salmonpaw right?” a black-furred she-cat meowed. “My name is Coldpaw by the way. You’re, like, legendary! The elders told us about you and how Sandfur and Breezetail were so mean to you! And you left! Weren’t you scared at all?”

Before Salmonpaw could respond, a brown-and-white cat

that she guessed was Aspenpaw was stomped out of the apprentices den. *Coldpaw seems a lot friendlier.*

"I bet she doesn't know anything!" Aspenpaw complained.

"Actually, I probably know more than you," Salmonpaw growled.

Aspenpaw rolled her eyes. "You were just made an apprentice today! And besides, what makes you so great, huh? What makes you better than me? Just because you were dumb enough to run away?"

Salmonpaw closed her eyes and sank her claws into the grass, barely able to resist the urge to rake them across her face. "Don't worry about Aspenpaw," Coldpaw whispered. "She's a worthless mouse-brain with no life."

Aspenpaw halted. "I heard that!" she hissed, spinning around and unsheathing her claws.

Icewhisker glared at her. "Don't even think about it," he warned. "Troutstar only just ended your punishment."

Aspenpaw narrowed her eyes and kept walking. "What happened?" Salmonpaw asked.

"Aspenpaw got in trouble for trying to fight with Flowerpaw a half-moon ago. She was confined to the camp until two days ago, actually," Coldpaw replied.

They'd reached the stream surrounding camp. "Aspenpaw, Coldpaw, demonstrate to Salmonpaw how to hunt," Icewhisker ordered.

Salmonpaw almost blurted out that she didn't need any help, but she decided to watch the apprentices first. Aspenpaw sat by the edge of the river. *Her shadow is falling over the water.*

Aspenpaw lunged a little too far, reaching out with her paw to try and grab a fish before they all swam away. With a

startled yowl, she fell into the stream. Coldpaw burst out laughing. “I thought hunting was your favorite thing to do! Or is that just because you’re worse at fighting?” she chuckled. “You fell over while you were charging at me!”

Aspenpaw shot a look at her. “Go ahead! Try to do it better yourself!” she snarled.

Coldpaw settled down on the riverbank and leaned back. She reached into the water, but was a little too slow. “Fox-dung! I missed it!” she growled with frustration.

Icewhisker sighed. “These apprentices have just given you a demonstration of how not to catch fish. So I guess I have to show you myself,” he meowed.

“No, you don’t,” Salmonpaw responded. “Let me try.”

Icewhisker looked doubtful but he nodded anyways. Salmonpaw sat down, carefully checking to be sure that her shadow was not falling on the water while maintaining her balance. She watched a fish swim by close to where she was sitting and anticipated where it would go. Her paw swung down into the water and she grabbed the fish on her claws. She brought it out of the water and towards her mouth, quickly dispatching it with a sharp nip to the spine.

Coldpaw gasped with amazement. “How did you do that? You were so good!”

“Beginner’s luck,” Aspenpaw grumbled. “Bet she can’t do that again.”

“I bet I can,” Salmonpaw growled. “And Coldpaw, I can do that because I hunted for myself every day after I left RiverClan. I’ve been doing it for moons.”

“How did you learn?” Coldpaw wondered.

“I taught myself,” Salmonpaw answered before turning her attention back towards catching another fish.

But she never did. Because that's when a terrified Flashfur appeared, running in their direction as fast as he could. Icewhisker swam across the river to meet him and the three apprentices followed. Salmonpaw noticed that she was the strongest swimmer, while Aspenpaw was the worst. Not that it surprised her that Aspenpaw wasn't good at swimming either.

"Flashfur, what happened?" Icewhisker demanded.

Flashfur looked up. His tail fur was singed and his pelt was thoroughly soaked, as if he'd swam across the river recently. "It's the Gathering," he panted. "StarClan set the island on fire."

A/N: Sorry for not updating for like forever(two days, whatever, forever and two days are very close to each other in size) :)

For some reason, this chapter was really hard for me to write, especially the part about Aspenpaw. It's always hard for me to capture an evil character's personality, particularly when they're not completely evil like Splashheart, Thornwhisker, Smokewhisker, or Whitefur. Anyhow, hope you enjoyed, please comment! :)

Chapter 14

Chapter 14

"Why?" Salmonpaw asked.

Flashfur looked at her. "Because the leaders started fighting," he replied.

"Salmonpaw, Aspenpaw, Coldpaw, return to camp," Icewhisker ordered. "We'll be back soon."

Salmonpaw was tempted to follow them anyways, but she didn't. The three cats walked back to camp. "Where's Icewhisker?" Falconflight, one of the cats who'd stayed behind to guard camp, asked.

"Oh, nowhere important," Aspenpaw meowed sarcastically. "He just went with Flashfur to watch the fire at the Gathering Island."

"What?" Falconflight shouted noisily.

It was loud enough to wake some of the warriors. Salmonpaw and Coldpaw both glared at Aspenpaw. "What Aspenpaw means is that StarClan set the Gathering Island on fire," Salmonpaw growled.

"Are our Clanmates okay?" Yellowfire asked worriedly.

All three cats shook their heads. "We don't know," Coldpaw responded.

The warriors gathered and prepared to leave, but Troutstar's voice suddenly pierced through the darkness. "It's okay! I think most of us are fine," the RiverClan leader yowled. "Flashfur and Icewhisker found a lot of us once we swam to the lakeshore. It's the other Clans who are having problems getting off of the island. But Ripplecloud is lucky he wasn't there tonight because he wouldn't have been able to swim across the lake. Now all cats that came to the Gathering go and stand by the RiverTree! We need to know who is missing!"

Salmonpaw stood and chatted with Coldpaw. "Who are your parents?" she whispered.

"Brightflame is my mother and Reedsplash is my father. They both went to the Gathering but I can see them in the crowd over there," the black-furred apprentice replied.

Aspenpaw joined them. "I wish I was there," she muttered.

"Me too. It would've been so cool to actually see fire!" Coldpaw was for once in agreement with her sister.

"Me three!" Salmonpaw declared. "I mean, there was actually a real fight!"

"What do you know about fighting? You haven't had any battle training! Don't tell me you taught yourself that too!" Aspenpaw snarled.

"Oh, shut up, Aspenpaw!" Coldpaw growled. "She can't be any worse than you!"

Aspenpaw was about to respond when Troutstar spoke. "RiverClan, I have a terrible announcement to make," she began.

"What?" Marshpaw shouted from the crowd. "That Aspenpaw hasn't been exiled from the Clan yet and she didn't run away yet either?"

Most of the cats couldn't help but laugh, but Troutstar didn't find it amusing. "No, Marshpaw, this is much more serious than your dumb jokes," the RiverClan leader meowed.

"What could possibly worse than that?" Marshpaw wondered. "Did she set a new record for how bad an apprentice can do in training? No, wait, did she accidentally kill someone useful? This fire at the Gathering is her fault for being so ugly that StarClan wanted to destroy her, but they unintentionally missed the RiverClan camp and hit the island!"

Salmonpaw was laughing so hard that she could hardly breathe. Coldpaw appeared to find it just as hilarious. "Marshpaw is the best," she whispered. "He's so funny!"

Aspenpaw looked outraged and she started to walk towards the RiverTree.

"Marshpaw! What is wrong with you?" Troutstar screamed furiously.

"Nothing! Other than the fact that I've seen Aspenpaw's hideous face!" he replied.

"Shut up!" Aspenpaw yelled.

"Follow your own advice!" Marshpaw replied cheerfully.

"Marshpaw!" Troutstar tried again. "Aspenpaw is a valuable member of this Clan! She has talent just like..."

"Talent? Aspenpaw?" Marshpaw interrupted. "What in StarClan's name are you talking about? If Aspenpaw has talent, then you're a kittypet!"

"Marshpaw! That is enough!" Troutstar insisted. "Aspenpaw has plenty of talents just like every cat in this camp!"

I can't believe he is actually still doing this!

"I never thought you were a liar, Troutstar," Marshpaw sighed, shaking his head with fake disbelief. "I'm certain that Aspenpaw has no talents and no hope for her future, but there are other cats in this camp with no talent as well."

"He's going to start on Mosspool now," Coldpaw hissed.

"Cats aren't scared of Mosspool because he has skill," Marshpaw continued, proving Coldpaw to be right. "No way. But when he's angry, some cats that are almost as dumb as Aspenpaw mistake him to be a badger. The most undersized, overweight badger in the world, of course."

"Marsh..." Troutstar started.

"Yes, it's true," Marshpaw went on. "Mosspool is the fattest cat in RiverClan. Fatter than the elders, even Dustcloud, if you can believe

that!"

"Hey!" Dustcloud exclaimed indignantly.

"What? The only characteristic between you all and Mosspool that Mosspool might be better about is...well, let's put it this way. The RiverClan elders are the laziest cats around the lake!" Marshpaw announced. "You can't even breathe without demanding that an apprentice needs to waste perfectly good training time helping you!"

"Marshpaw! Don't even think about saying another word for the rest of this meeting unless you want to be confined to...no, not to camp, to the nursery for a moon!" Troutstar growled.

Marshpaw wisely decided not to ignore her warning and didn't speak again. "Meeting dismissed!" the RiverClan leader shouted, leaping down from the RiverTree.

"Troutstar, wait! What was the announcement you were going to make?" Icewhisker asked.

Troutstar quickly jumped back onto the branch where she had been standing. "Sorry everybody, a certain annoying apprentice made me forget why I'd called this meeting in the first place!" she apologized, shooting a glare at Marshpaw. "I have terrible news...two of our Clanmates are dead! Breezetail and Wavestorm are with StarClan now!"

Coldpaw gasped next to the red-furred apprentice. "Breezetail is your father, right?" she whispered. "Salmonpaw, I'm so sorry!"

Salmonpaw's Clanmates were probably more upset than she was. *StarClan forgive me please...I'm not sad at all that he died. I don't feel anything at all for him. Well, maybe not quite nothing. I feel plenty of hatred for Breezetail.*

"Don't be," Salmonpaw responded. "I don't even care. I probably shouldn't be saying this, but I hate him. A lot. And honestly, I'm kind of happy that he's dead."

A/N: Breezetail is dead! I hope you enjoyed Marshpaw making

fun of a lot of cats, I thought it would be kind of funny :)

Chapter 15

Chapter 15

Aspenpaw immediately went and found Marshpaw. She sliced her claws across his nose. “If you ever do…” she began.

The apprentice stopped as Marshpaw dramatically collapsed onto the ground. “My nose! Aspenpaw, this might kill me!” he howled.

“Whatever, Marshkit,” she growled and marched away.

Rain began to fall from the dark gray storm clouds above. The water almost instantly became so strong that it was hard to see through. Marshpaw scrambled back onto his feet and all three apprentices turned their heads to look up at the sky. Mosspool appeared behind Marshpaw. “Joking around again, I see?” he meowed. “Well, guess what your jokes have earned you? A trip to Troutstar’s den. She wants to speak to you now.”

Marshpaw pretended to appear confused. “Why? Is she going to explain to me that she agrees with what I said about you, the elders, and Aspenpaw but she just couldn’t say that in front of the Clan?” he asked.

The RiverClan deputy narrowed his eyes. “Go. NOW!” he snarled.

Marshpaw obeyed. “Coldpaw, you are going with Ripplecloud, Puddlesplash, and Blizzardfrost to the WindClan border,” Mosspool growled. “And Salmonpaw, you and your mentor are coming with me to search the lake in case any cats from other Clans swam across to this side of the lake.”

“Okay!” Salmonpaw shouted cheerfully.

Mosspool beckoned for her to follow him with his tail.

They swam across the stream to where Icewhisker was waiting and started walking. “I bet there won’t be any cats there,” Salmonpaw’s mentor grumbled. “Cats from the other Clans can’t swim.”

“I agree with you, but Troutstar said we have to check anyways,” Mosspool responded.

Salmonpaw dashed ahead, eager to get to lake first. She gasped as she saw the island from the distance. A cloud of smoke hovered above the tops of the burnt trees. She didn’t glimpse many leaves and their bark was black with soot. And that’s when she looked down and saw the unmoving bodies of two cats. *Are they dead?* She rushed down towards them and wrinkled her nose as a pungent, unfamiliar odor drifted into it.

One cat was a light gray she-cat and the other was a dark gray tom. Both were drenched and their flanks were barely rising. *At least it proves that they’re still alive.*

Salmonpaw raced back to find Mosspool and Icewhisker. “Mosspool! Icewhisker! Two cats, barely alive, at the edge of the lake!” she yowled.

Icewhisker’s eyes widened. “Breezetail and Wavestorm?” he asked hopefully.

Salmonpaw shook her head. “I’ve never seen them before,” she replied. “And they don’t smell like RiverClan!”

Mosspool quickened his pace. “Who dares trespass on RiverClan territory?” he shouted, marching down towards the two cats.

Icewhisker and Salmonpaw exchanged glances and followed. Her mentor sniffed the air. “The she-cat is ThunderClan and the tom is WindClan,” he whispered. “They’re young, probably still apprentices.”

The light gray she-cat coughed weakly and lifted her head, but the dark gray tom didn’t stir. “This apprentice I chatted with last night followed me when I tried to swim across the lake.

We didn't know how to swim or anything, and we both nearly drowned. We were trying to swim to our own territories, but I guess we accidentally went to RiverClan. We'd return to our own territories, but we're in no condition to go anywhere," she explained. "Could you please send a message to Cloudstar and Rabbitstar?"

Mosspool looked even more suspicious while Icewhisker simply seemed to be considering what the ThunderClan apprentice had said. "Few cats were able to force their way onto the tree-bridge. Many non-RiverClan cats drowned trying to swim across the lake, and the majority of those who didn't attempt to swim the distance were consumed by the fire. All of the leaders except Troutstar lost a life, but she didn't because she could swim! We lost the fewest warriors because of our unique ability to swim," Icewhisker boasted and Salmonpaw felt proud of her Clan as well. "You two are lucky to have survived though. Mosspool, what should we do with these cats?"

"Take them back to camp until they're well enough to travel back to their own," the RiverClan deputy answered. "You and I will journey back to camp and get a few other warriors to help carry them back, since I doubt they can walk. Meanwhile, your apprentice will stay here and guard them to make sure they don't try to escape."

"Mosspool, I highly doubt they're going anywhere on their own anytime soon," Icewhisker sighed.

Mosspool narrowed his eyes. "We must be sure," he growled. "They could be spies! WindClan and ThunderClan could've formed an alliance against us!"

Icewhisker rolled his eyes. "Whatever," he snorted disbelievingly. "Salmonpaw, stay with them for now."

Salmonpaw felt her heart quicken as the two warriors walked away. *The elders always used to talk about how cats from other Clans are mean and untrustworthy. What do I do?*

A/N: Great StarClan, I haven't been doing a good job updating

this story recently. :(I apologize 120% for that and promise to work harder(maybe finish this story before the end of summer) :D

Anyhow, here's the next chapter. I'm guessing most of you know who these two cats are? :)

Chapter 16

Chapter 16

Just act normal and be friendly. And if this ThunderClan apprentice wants to be rude, then ignore her.

"Hi! I'm Salmonpaw. What's your name?" she asked, walking over to the light gray she-cat.

"Crazypaw," the ThunderClan apprentice replied.

Crazypaw? That's a weird name. I don't think anyone in RiverClan would give their kit an awful name like that.

She didn't say that out loud. "Cool!" she shouted instead, faking cheerfulness. "Did you hear about the lightning bolt and the fighting at the Gathering yesterday?"

*Of course she did, mouse-brain! Crazypaw and that WindClan apprentice were there! "*I wish I'd been there!" Salmonpaw continued. "A real fight and I could've seen what fire looks like! I wonder what it's like to walk across the tree-bridge and..."

"I was there," Crazypaw interrupted. "And trust me, you should be glad you weren't there. Stonepaw and I nearly died."

How dumb are cats of other Clans? Swimming is a simple solution! "How?" Salmonpaw couldn't help but blurt out. "All you had to do was swim across the lake!"

Perhaps I should demonstrate how easy it is. "Watch this!" she yowled, leaping into the lake.

Salmonpaw enjoyed the cold water soaking her fur and relaxing her muscles. She climbed out eventually and shook herself dry. She noticed a gleam of annoyance appear briefly in Crazypaw's green eyes and remembered that cats of other Clans didn't like getting wet. "Sorry," she muttered, but the ThunderClan apprentice didn't

seem to hear her.

"See? Swimming is easy!" she declared.

I feel sorry for other Clans. What fun do they have if they can't swim without drowning? RiverClan really is the best Clan!

"Not for us," Crazypaw sighed. "We're from ThunderClan and WindClan. We haven't trained for swimming."

"That's sad," she responded. "A Clan that doesn't swim? Life must be so boring! Swimming is so much fun!"

A sudden thought entered her mind. *I bet she's hungry.*

Salmonpaw sat down by the lake, feeling small waves lap at her paws and carry sand back with them as they retreated. A fish, even smaller than the ones in the stream, swam by. She pounced, thankfully not missing while Crazypaw was watching. She dropped it by the ThunderClan apprentice's forepaws. "Here! You can eat it if you're hungry," Salmonpaw meowed.

Crazypaw looked hesitant. It was clear to Salmonpaw that she didn't want to eat the fish. She sniffed it and instantly pulled back, wrinkling her nose with disgust. "What is that thing?" the ThunderClan apprentice demanded.

Isn't it obvious? "A fish," she answered. "They're delicious!"

Crazypaw leaned forward and took a tiny bite of it. Her eyes widened and Salmonpaw could tell she didn't enjoy it. "Did you like it?" she asked anyways.

"Uh, yeah," Crazypaw lied. "You can have the rest though. I'm not hungry."

Salmonpaw was happy to eat the fish but wasn't sure the warrior code allowed it. *Well...I'm not on a hunting patrol so I guess I can eat it before feeding the Clan.*

The RiverClan apprentice devoured it quickly. *I can't believe she's being this nice. I expected her to be mean and everything but she*

actually reminds me of Rainpaw!

They chatted for a little while longer. Salmonpaw told her about how wonderful it was to live in RiverClan and Crazypaw informed her on the life of ThunderClan. *The poor cats...I remember how awful it was sleeping the forest with those crowded trees on my journey. They have to put up with that every night! How can they see StarClan?*

Plus they're stuck with eating tasteless land creatures! I'm glad I've never eaten a mouse or a bird and I don't plan to try it unless I have to! And they climb trees? Aren't they scared of falling?

Mosspool and Icewhisker returned with Owlfeather, Reedsplash, Ripplecloud, and Hollystorm. They carried the two apprentices to the RiverClan camp and walked into Troutstar's den. Salmonpaw assumed she wasn't invited to follow, but as soon as they disappeared inside of the large bramble thicket, she crept over towards it. Troutstar gave them permission to stay in the medicine cats den with Leafwhisker, who was full medicine cat now that Dawnshine had moved to the elders den, but it was only until they were well enough to return to their own Clans.

The cats emerged from the den after that only a few tail-lengths away from where Salmonpaw was eavesdropping. Fortunately, no one noticed her. "What are your names?" Mosspool growled to Crazypaw.

"I'm Crazypaw and that's Stonepaw," the light gray she-cat sighed.

A/N: I noticed. Salmonpaw doesn't seem as loud, cheerful, kit-like or dumb as she did in Crazystar's Battle but it doesn't really fit her personality in this book. I kind of like it more where she's just being friendly instead of super loud and slightly annoying :) Tell me what you think please and hope you enjoyed!

Chapter 17

Chapter 17

For some reason, Salmonpaw couldn't stop thinking about the newcomers. She tried to sleep, but it was useless. She climbed soundlessly out of her nest and thankfully managed to escape without waking the other apprentices.

Salmonpaw walked over to the medicine cats den and peeked inside. A figure suddenly stood up and she pulled back, worried that she'd been seen. She didn't want Leafwhisker to ask her what she was doing because she honestly didn't know.

But the cat that stepped out of the den wasn't Leafwhisker. It was Crazypaw. Salmonpaw relaxed. "Hi!" she meowed, revealing herself.

Alarm flashed on Crazypaw's face. "Shh," she hissed. "Keep your voice down! I'm not supposed to be out here."

I can't blame her for sneaking out here, it's boring in that dumb medicine cat den. I remember when I was stuck there for only one day after fighting with Hailcloud. "Oh," the RiverClan apprentice whispered. "Sorry. I know Troutstar confined you to that dumb medicine cat den. I think that's so unfair! I'd be bored out of my mind stuck in there all day!"

Salmonpaw unintentionally found herself caught in a flashback…

"Found you!" Foxkit declared.

She emerged from Smallstar's den, where she'd been hiding. "Aw!" Salmonkit whined. "No fair! I never thought you'd look in the leader's den!"

Foxkit laughed as she leapt onto Salmonkit's back and

knocked her over. “You’re lucky Smallstar didn’t return and find you! You better hope he doesn’t notice your scent!” Salmonkit’s sister purred as she marched away.

Ripplecloud approached. “Playing hide-and-seek again, aren’t you?” he asked with a gleam in his eyes. “I thought I’d show you a place where you can hide that no cat will find you.”

Salmonpaw shook her head to clear her mind. “I thought I’d show you a place where you can hide that no cat will find you,” she finished, copying Ripplecloud’s words.

Salmonpaw started walking and gestured with her tail for Crazypaw to follow. She glanced back once to be sure and the ThunderClan apprentice was running towards her, trying to catch up.

Salmonpaw saw the rosebush and felt the edge of the hole in the ground in front of her. She pushed the pebbles that blocked the entrance away and worried momentarily that she wouldn’t fit through. But despite being a tight squeeze, both cats made it through.

The ground sloped downwards and led into darkness. There was no way to see, but Salmonpaw trusted the river to become visible soon.

Sure enough, a bright blue glow appeared ahead. “Is that the stream?” Crazypaw wondered. “If it is, how doesn’t this tunnel flood?”

I didn’t understand now, but I think that it’s because of a Twoleg substance that Rainpaw called “glass” or something. Or maybe not. You never know with stuff built by Twolegs. They’re strange creatures.

Salmonpaw nodded. “It doesn’t flood because the Twolegs built a tunnel out of some see-through material,” she answered. “I don’t know why. Maybe they like sitting here underneath the water and staring at the water too. But I thought you might want to know about this place. It’s private and no one

else knows about it. And it's too far under for anyone to accidentally touch it with their paws while they're swimming across."

"Thanks, Salmonpaw," Crazypaw meowed. "How did you find this place?"

"Well, I guess not exactly nobody else knows about, but only one cat though. My older brother, Ripplecloud, showed me it!" Salmonpaw replied. "Said I was the only cat besides him to know about it!"

Salmonpaw stepped onto the glass Twoleg tunnel leading into the stream. It stopped for some reason about halfway across the river. "C'mon!" the RiverClan apprentice called. "You can see more of the stream from here!"

Crazypaw looked nervous. *You won't fall into the river, mouse-brain. I would've fallen in too if that was the case!*

The ThunderClan apprentice walked over and Salmonpaw tried to ignore her pungent scent. "Look up!" she shouted, raising her head to stare at the water above.

They sat there like that until dawn in silence. *I'm guessing she'll come back here tomorrow…and perhaps she'll bring Stonepaw with her.*

***

Salmonpaw waited, careful not to make a sound. Close to moonhigh, Crazypaw emerged from the medicine cats den with Stonepaw following behind. As soon as the two disappeared into the rosebush, she crept after them and listened. "This is like the tunnels at home, except smaller," the WindClan apprentice whispered.

Crazypaw didn't say anything. Salmonpaw inched closer and suddenly heard Stonepaw gasp in surprise. "It's the river!" Stonepaw announced.

There was no conversation for a moment. Salmonpaw wished she could go near enough for them to be visible, but she

couldn't risk being seen. "Crazypaw," Stonepaw began, sounding hesitant.

"What?" Crazypaw asked.

"I know I just met you and we're from different Clans but I…I love you," he stammered.

Salmonpaw could hardly keep herself from voicing her opinion. *I suppose I'm not the only one with secrets. But they both should know better, doesn't ThunderClan tell the stories about Graystripe and Silverstream? Let's see how she responds…*

"Oh, Stonepaw…I love you too," Crazypaw purred.

Salmonpaw's suspicions were confirmed. *I've heard enough…time to leave and get some sleep.*

She carefully turned around and started to walk back, but accidentally tripped over her own paws. "Someone is here!" Stonepaw growled.

"Oh no," Crazypaw muttered. "Run. Now!"

Salmonpaw pressed herself against the side of the tunnel and hoped she wasn't seen or scented in the blackness. The two cats rushed past her, fear-scent evident. They were apparently too panicked to sniff the air and it was too dark to be seen.

As soon as she was sure they were gone, Salmonpaw snuck back into the apprentices den and settled down in her nest.

A/N: Watching and playing with our new puppy and trying to finish a chapter while he's napping. :) Not that I mind at all, actually I'm extremely happy and he's super cute, just means less time to update. Hope you enjoyed this chapter! :D

Chapter 18

Chapter 18

It had been three days since Salmonpaw had heard Stonepaw and Crazypaw admit that they loved each other. But she pretended like she didn't know when she went in to chat with the ThunderClan she-cat after training.

"Salmonpaw!" Icewhisker called.

Salmonpaw dashed over to where her mentor was waiting. "You did outstanding today when we were practicing hunting," he began. "I think you should focus your efforts on battle training instead of hunting."

"Icewhisker, I'm a good hunter but are you sure I don't need more training?" she asked.

The white-furred tom nodded. "You're as good as any warrior I've ever seen," he replied.

"Okay…well, thanks, I guess!" Salmonpaw meowed as she walked towards the fresh-kill pile and selected a fish to eat.

Hailcloud settled down next to her. "Hey, do you mind if I eat with you?" he asked. "And then maybe go hunting after?"

"I don't mind at all," she replied through a mouthful of fish. "And hunting sounds great."

They were soon done eating and they searched for Mosspool. The black-furred deputy was standing by the leaders den, talking with Troutstar. "Mosspool!" Hailcloud shouted and he turned his head towards them. "Can we go hunting together?"

A gleam of amusement appeared in Mosspool's green eyes. "Sure," Mosspool purred. "Just make sure you actually hunt instead of talking the whole time."

As soon as they were out of Mosspool's hearing range, Salmonpaw whispered, "What was that comment about?"

Hailcloud didn't answer. He leapt into the stream and swam across. Salmonpaw sighed and followed.

Hailcloud led Salmonpaw to the part of the river near the Leafy Oak and sat down. By sundown, they were ready to return to camp and she couldn't help but notice that she'd caught more than the dark brown tom. "Icewhisker loves you," he blurted out suddenly.

Salmonpaw could tell he wished he hadn't said that. "What?" she demanded, dropping her prey.

"Um, my brother loves you," Hailcloud repeated.

My mentor does not love me! But somehow, she knew Hailcloud was telling the truth. "Why in StarClan's name did you mention that?" she asked.

He took a deep breath and looked at her. For a moment, Salmonpaw thought she was going to melt in his sparkling green eyes. "Because I feel the same way," he responded.

Icewhisker was kind and gentle. But Hailcloud was playful and fun while still being caring at the same time. *They're both nice…but if I had to choose, I think Hailcloud is right for me. Besides, Icewhisker isn't as handsome as Hailcloud. I like Icewhisker, but I love Hailcloud.* "I'm too young to love any cat," she tried to tell herself.

She felt warm breath against her ear. "I disagree," he whispered before marching away.

She sat there for a while without moving, thinking about what he said. Finally, she shook her head and returned to camp only to see a crowd gathered around her friend, Rainpaw.

Salmonpaw couldn't tell at first…but then she realized they weren't there for anything good. Rainpaw's right hindleg had a massive gash in it and was twisted the wrong way. Her friend

appeared to be unconscious. Leafwhisker was examining her and wasn't looking happy. "Dawnshine!" he snapped to his former mentor. "Get some cobwebs and marigold!"

Dawnshine didn't mention the fact that she was no longer a medicine cat. She simply went and retrieved the requested herbs.

"Do those two apprentices know what's happening?" Leafwhisker asked as he chewed the marigold into a paste.

"No," Dawnshine replied. "They're still asleep."

"Will she be okay?" Salmonpaw meowed worriedly.

The medicine cat looked up. "Depends on what you mean by okay," he answered. "Yes, she'll live. But whether she'll be able to walk properly again? That's another question."

"She has to be a warrior!" Salmonpaw protested.

Hailcloud walked over. "It's okay," he tried to comfort her.

"No, it's not okay," she grumbled.

"She'll be fine," Hailcloud responded.

I have a feeling that's a lie, judging by the expression on Leafwhisker's face right now.

A/N: Believe me, I feel really bad for not updating for so long. So I promise to get at least one more chapter done today, possibly more! :) Sorry for the billionth cliffhanger in this book and hope you enjoyed!

Chapter 19

Chapter 19

Rainpaw had returned to being fully conscious by the next morning. Salmonpaw had barely gotten any sleep that night, her wild imagination picturing ways her friend could die. When she drifted briefly into the world of dreams, she would find herself trapped in a nightmare where the former kittypet was being killed at night by a monster with eyes glowing in the darkness.

She rushed over to the medicine cat den to find a large group of cats already there. Stonepaw and Crazypaw had temporarily been sent out of the bramble thicket. “What happened?” Troutstar demanded.

“A dog started chasing me,” Rainpaw began shakily.

Every cat except for Salmonpaw appeared to stiffen at those words. Even Troutstar seemed nervous. “What did the dog look like?” the RiverClan leader asked.

“Massive dog,” she replied. “And black-and-tan fur…”

“Is it the same dog that killed Smallstar?” Bluesplash gasped.

“What?” Salmonpaw screeched, turning around in an attempt to find Hailcloud. “I thought you said a patrol got rid of it!”

The dark brown tom was right behind her. He lowered his head, avoiding her eyes. “Well, I didn’t want you to worry…” he tried to defend himself.

“I can handle the truth!” she interrupted furiously.

“Salmonpaw, calm down!” Troutstar ordered. “Does it make you happy to know that there’s a vicious dog roaming our territory? Hailcloud was trying to protect you!”

The red-furred apprentice took a deep breath. “Well, I don’t need protecting,” she responded, still with a slight note of anger in her voice.

“How did you escape, Rainpaw?” Troutstar asked.

“I was climbing a tree and the dog caught my leg with its claws,” Rainpaw answered. “But Flashfur appeared out of nowhere and jumped on its back. He distracted it and let it chase him away from me. I managed to get down without falling and breaking my neck. I dragged myself back to camp, close enough to call for help. And then I collapsed and don’t remember…”

“Where’s Flashfur?” Blizzardfrost screeched.

“What? You mean he’s not here?” Rainpaw meowed.

“Mosspool, lead a group of cats to find Flashfur,” Troutstar growled. “The rest of you carry on like this never happened.”

Mosspool’s patrol came back shortly after carrying Flashfur’s body. “No!” Rainpaw screamed. “He saved my life! He can’t be dead!”

I’ll find that dog! I can’t let more of my Clanmates die!
“Don’t worry, I’ll get revenge for you,” Salmonpaw hissed.

“Salmonpaw, no,” Rainpaw meowed insistently. “I know that tone of voice. You’re not planning anything reasonable and…”

“If you try to stop me, I’ll tell them you used to be a kittypet,” Salmonpaw whispered.

“You wouldn’t,” her friend muttered.

“Yes, I would,” she snarled fiercely before marching off.

Salmonpaw caught a trace of the dog’s scent close to the Training Shore. She placed her nose close to the ground and followed it. All of a sudden, the beast emerged from a bush and she

found herself face-to-face with dog. Confronted by massive yellow fangs and an animal twice her size, she realized this wasn't such a great idea. But the RiverClan apprentice unsheathed her claws anyways. *I won't go down without a fight.*

With a loud snarl, the dog charged towards her and Salmonpaw's heart began to pound. *Actually, maybe I should flee.*

She took off running at top speed and the dog barked excitedly before following. *Great StarClan, what have I gotten myself into?*

A/N: What do you think is going to happen? :)

Chapter 20

Chapter 20

Salmonpaw was running towards the camp, desperate reach it before the dog caught up to her. Her breathing had sped up almost as much as her heartbeat. The beast was close behind, gradually nearing her.

Suddenly, a white-furred tom exploded out of some nearby bushes and swiped his claws across the dog's face before it realized what was happening. *Icewhisker! Hailcloud was telling the truth, Icewhisker does love me!*

Icewhisker dashed off and glanced back to see the dog chasing after him. She followed, knowing she had to stop him. "Icewhisker, no!" Salmonpaw screamed. "You'll get yourself killed!"

"It would be worth it for you, but thankfully, that is unnecessary," he responded. "I have a plan."

It didn't look like it. It looked more like he was running for his life. But as her mentor passed underneath a tree, a dark brown tom dropped out of a branch and onto the dog's back. Before it could throw him off, Hailcloud had his teeth in its neck and it collapsed onto the ground. Icewhisker and Salmonpaw were both panting heavily. "We need to tell Troutstar the dog is dead," the RiverClan apprentice wheezed.

The dark brown tom's green eyes gleamed with anger. He didn't respond to her comment. "What in StarClan's name were you thinking?" Hailcloud screeched furiously.

Salmonpaw narrowed her eyes. "I was trying to defend my Clanmates!" she snarled.

"Would getting yourself killed help RiverClan?" Hailcloud responded.

“Maybe,” she replied. “It’s not like I do anything useful…”

“Salmonpaw, quit being ridiculous!” Hailcloud interrupted.

“It’s true!” she responded. “I bet half of RiverClan wishes I’d never come back!”

“Breezetail was the only one who wasn’t pleased to see that you’d returned! And if anything happened to you, I…I’d…” his voice faltered. “I’d be lost.”

“Same here,” Icewhisker growled. “Except I care about you more than Hailcloud.”

“Not true!” Hailcloud protested. “If you truly cared about her, you’d let her choose who she loves or whether she loves either of us on her own!”

“I’m the one who noticed her leaving the camp!” Icewhisker insisted. “She would’ve been dead right now if it wasn’t for me!”

Salmonpaw wished they’d stop arguing. Hailcloud seemed to notice the expression on her face. “That’s enough,” he meowed, clearly trying to calm himself for her sake. “Let’s not make Salmonpaw endure this.”

“As I was saying before, we need to tell Troutstar that the dog is dead,” Salmonpaw sighed.

“She’d never believe us,” Icewhisker muttered.

“Well, let’s carry it back,” she responded.

The three of them managed to drag the dog back to the island and not drown while they were swimming across the river with it. “Troutstar!” Hailcloud called.

The RiverClan leader looked up from where she was half-heartedly eating a fish in the shade of the RiverTree. Her eyes

widened when she saw the dog's dead body. "What happened?" she demanded.

"We killed it," Icewhisker answered.

Troutstar leapt onto a branch of the tree. "Let all cats old enough to catch their own prey gather beneath the RiverTree for a Clan meeting!" she yowled.

The Clan was soon gathered. "Hailcloud, Icewhisker, and Salmonpaw have killed the dog!" she announced.

"Great!" Marshpaw's voice declared. "Now we just need to get rid of Aspenpaw!"

"You better be quiet or I'll cancel your final assessment," Troutstar hissed. "Which is currently scheduled for the day after tomorrow. Salmonpaw has proven her bravery and she'll be there with you."

"What?" Aspenpaw shrieked. "She's only been here for a couple of days!"

"She's as good as I am at hunting and Icewhisker tells me that she already has progressed in battle training as much as Marshpaw and Flowerpaw!" Troutstar responded, looking at the white-furred tom.

"Yes, she learns really fast," Icewhisker agreed. "It usually only takes her one try, sometimes two for the more complicated ones, to perfect a fighting move I show her. She's naturally talented at everything, it's truly incredible."

My final assessment already? Only one more day of training and then I might be a warrior? I can't believe it.

Chapter 21

Chapter 21

Salmonpaw was so nervous as Eaglefeather, Marshpaw's mentor, told all three apprentices to sit down by the riverbank. They hadn't left the island yet because the hunting part of the final assessment was done using the stream surrounding camp. "Marshpaw, catch two fish," Eaglefeather meowed.

Marshpaw missed the first time but successfully caught it the next two times. Flowerpaw was perfect. And then it was Salmonpaw's turn. She took a deep breath. *You've done this for moons now, you'll be fine. Just pretend like your warrior name isn't at stake.*

She leaned back and lifted a forepaw. She swiftly brought it down and managed to grab two fish at once. She breathed a silent sigh of relief. She turned towards Icewhisker, Eaglefeather, and Rosethorn, who all looked astonished. "Does this count for two fish?" she asked.

All three mentors quickly nodded. "Okay then…" Eaglefeather was lost for words. "Let's swim across the river, we'll follow behind you."

Salmonpaw leapt in without any hesitation, pleased that she landed in the water before Marshpaw or Flowerpaw. She made sure to keep a steady pace while also swimming as fast as possible. She was the first to reach the other side and pulled herself out. She nearly slipped, which would probably not have looked good in front of the three mentors, but she fortunately was able to tighten her grip in time. The red-furred she-cat stood and waited for the other cats to arrive.

"You swam awfully fast, Salmonpaw," Marshpaw purred teasingly. "Scared that the fish are going to bite you?"

“Marshpaw!” Eaglefeather shouted with annoyance. “This is not the time or the place for your dumb jokes!”

“Sorry,” Marshpaw muttered, but he clearly didn’t mean it.

“We’re going to go by Great Pine and see what you can smell,” Eaglefeather meowed and started to lead the way.”

“Salmonpaw, you go first,” Rosethorn ordered once they reached the tree. “Name one thing you can scent.”

She carefully sniffed the ground. “Fox,” she growled.

“How old?” Icewhisker asked.

“I’d guess it is from about two or three days ago,” she replied.

“Can you tell what it was doing?” Icewhisker continued.

Salmonpaw inhaled the scent again. “Near the base of the tree its smell is stronger and is mixed in with the scent of blood and a dead pigeon,” she answered.

The white-furred tom nodded. “Very good,” he praised her. “Marshpaw, I believe it is your turn?”

“I can smell all of us!” Marshpaw declared.

Eaglefeather narrowed his eyes. “You know that is not what we’re looking for.”

Marshpaw sighed. “Ripplecloud passed through here yesterday and it smells like he buried two mice that he caught just in front of where Rosethorn is standing until he was ready to take it back to camp.”

Eaglefeather nodded. “Flowerpaw, what do you smell?” the tom asked.

“Leafwhisker came here sometime more than likely in the

afternoon two days ago," she responded. "It seems like he was carrying tansy with him."

"You all did well," Eaglefeather meowed. "Now we'll go to the Training Shore to test your battle skills."

A/N: I've been gone since early Monday morning but I'm back since this afternoon. I saw Percy Jackson: Sea of Monsters when it came out today but it was really disappointing. It followed the book even less than the first movie... :D

As always, hope you enjoyed the chapter!

Chapter 22

Chapter 22

"Marshpaw and Salmonpaw will fight each other first and the winner of that battle will face Flowerpaw," Eaglefeather announced. "Now remember, claws sheathed. We're not trying to kill each other here…"

"Aw!" Marshpaw complained jokingly.

"Just please start attacking each other," Eaglefeather sighed. "Your constant jokes annoy everybody."

"That's not true! I know Troutstar secretly loves them!" Marshpaw declared.

"If Marshpaw won't fight, then you can attack first, Salmonpaw," Eaglefeather growled.

Salmonpaw didn't hesitate. She leapt towards him but he was more alert than he seemed to be. He sidestepped and as she landed, he sprang onto her back. Just like that, the red-furred she-cat was pinned to the ground. Icewhisker looked disappointed. "That was easier than I thought!" Marshpaw chuckled as Salmonpaw relaxed.

Just as Eaglefeather was about to state that Marshpaw had won, she heaved herself upward and threw him off. His eyes widened with surprise but as soon as he hit the ground, he quickly scrambled back to his paws and charged. Salmonpaw held her ground and braced herself for the impact. Both cats tumbled onto the ground but by pure luck, she landed on top of Marshpaw. "Get off of me," he groaned. "Are you trying to suffocate me? You weigh almost as much as Mosspool!"

The three mentors and Flowerpaw were trying not to laugh. Despite being defeated by the red-furred she-cat, his sense of

humor remained. One thing Salmonpaw knew from talking with Coldpaw was that Marshpaw was not a sore loser. “I guess Salmonpaw wins!” Rosethorn purred.

Salmonpaw wound up being beaten by Flowerpaw, although it took her a long time because the red-furred she-cat put up a good fight. She was disappointed to lose and hoped for a rematch sometime soon.

***

She visited Rainpaw as soon as they returned. “Hi, Salmonpaw!” Crazypaw meowed cheerfully while Stonepaw continued to sleep.

Salmonpaw nodded quickly before sitting down next to her friend. “I have something to tell you,” Rainpaw whispered. “My leg isn’t going to heal properly but Leafwhisker says I can be his apprentice.”

It took Salmonpaw a moment to digest that. “What?” she screeched at last. “You can’t be a boring medicine cat! You’re destined to be a warrior!”

Her friend shook her head. “I’m afraid not,” she sighed. “But that doesn’t mean we won’t be friends.”

Salmonpaw was devastated. *No! I need Rainpaw to become a warrior like me!*

***

All three apprentices lifted their heads and looked at their leader. Salmonpaw was hardly able to contain her excitement. “I do,” she replied, hearing Marshpaw and Flowerpaw echo her words.

“Then by the powers of StarClan, I give you your warrior names. Salmonpaw, from this moment on, you will be known as Salmonstorm. StarClan honors your bravery and intelligence and we welcome you as a full warrior of RiverClan,” Troutstar meowed.

Salmonstorm! That’s such a cool name!

“Flowerpaw, you will be known as Flowerfur. StarClan honors your loyalty and skill and we welcome you as a full warrior of our Clan. Marshpaw, from now on, you will be known as Marshcloud. StarClan honors your…” Troutstar paused for a moment. “Sense of humor and friendliness and we welcome you as a full warrior of RiverClan.”

Salmonstorm listened with pride as her Clanmates chanted her new name. She’d been so scared to fail the assessment, worried that she wouldn’t get another chance if she did. But after defeating Marshcloud and Flowerfur in almost every challenge, her doubts had faded and she was confident that she fully deserved her warrior name. As her friends came and congratulated her, she was happier than ever that she’d made the decision to return to her Clan.

Salmonstorm settled down near the fresh-kill pile and tried to ignore the cold air that meant leaf-bare was on the way. Marshcloud and Flowerfur sat next to each other by the Beginner’s Pool and she wasn’t expecting to suddenly feel warm fur against her back. She turned to see Hailcloud beside her and forgot that she wasn’t supposed to speak. “You don’t have to stay here,” she whispered. “This isn’t your vigil.”

“I know I don’t have to,” he purred quietly. “But I want to.”

Chapter 23

Chapter 23

It had been a whole moon since Salmonstorm returned to RiverClan. Troutstar had noticed her speaking to Crazypaw each day before she received her warrior name and told her she wasn't allowed to speak to the two apprentices until they left the camp. She was disappointed because she didn't think Crazypaw knew she had received her warrior name and also because the gray-furred she-cat had been a good friend.

Rainpaw was now a medicine cat apprentice and to the red-furred she-cat's dismay, ever since her friend had visited the Moonpool they had grown more distant. If Salmonstorm was asked now who her best friend was, she'd probably say Coldpaw or Hailcloud. Whenever they spoke to each other, Rainpaw kept interrupting when she tried to speak. The former kittypet went on and on about how awesome meeting StarClan was and how there were so many herbs to memorize. She talked about how useful they were, starting to describe each one individually and what they smelled, looked, and felt like. Salmonstorm eventually pretended to hear a cat call her name and made a hasty excuse on why she had to leave. The new warrior hadn't spoken to her friend for over a quarter-moon now, but she'd heard Troutstar name her among the cats going to the Gathering. *Probably just because she's medicine cat apprentice.*

But Salmonstorm was going as well and was excited to see the Great Oak from close up. *I just hope StarClan doesn't set the Great Oak ablaze again. But if they do, at least I can swim.*

Rainpaw came up next to her. "Hi!" she shouted cheerfully and Salmonstorm braced herself for a boring discussion about herbs.

"Hey," she responded half-heartedly.

“Leafwhisker taught me a new herb!” she announced and Salmonstorm stifled a yawn. “It’s called chamomile and he says it’s one of the traveling herbs given for strength.”

“Cool. Hey, did you hear about how Aspenpaw fell in the river again yesterday?” the warrior asked, desperately trying to change the subject to something more interesting.

“No,” Rainpaw answered before returning to talking about her medicine cat training. “Frostcloud stepped on a thorn while hunting and Leafwhisker allowed me to pull it out. It was so huge! And then we had to tell her to lick the wound clean so we could apply cobwebs without having to use marigold because obviously we don’t want to waste our supplies. But we also don’t want it to get infected. Oh, and did you hear Sandfur is expecting kits?”

That caught Salmonstorm’s attention. “What? Who’s the father?” she demanded.

“Mosspool! Frostcloud was so angry! And apparently Sandfur doesn’t know how to properly choose a mate,” Rainpaw replied. “First Breezetail and now Mosspool!”

***

No fighting occurred at the Gathering, though the leaders came pretty close. Cloudstar of ThunderClan accused Shadestar, the ShadowClan leader, of displeasing StarClan. Salmonstorm remembered their exact words.

“Yes,” Cloudstar meowed. “I think we should change the name of the Great Oak as a reminder not to displease StarClan, SHADESTAR.”

Shadestar’s eyes gleamed in the darkness. “Yes,” he responded. “Maybe it should be named after the one who started it all by accusing Rabbitstar.”

“I wonder which cat was the first to attack and joined in when I CORRECTLY accused Rabbitstar of trespassing, which by the

way, hasn't stopped yet," Cloudstar growled.

Rabbitstar stiffened and the red-furred she-cat didn't miss the fury in his eyes. "That's because you were too scared to attack first yourself!" Shadestar snarled.

They were only stopped by StarClan sending clouds to cover the moon and Honeywhisker, ThunderClan's medicine cat, reminding them of the fire at the previous Gathering.

Crazypaw and Stonepaw surprised their Clans by showing up at the island but Salmonstorm suspected it was only because Troutstar told them they had to come. Smokewhisker, who was the WindClan apprentice's father and the WindClan deputy, was angry at his son for returning though. If there were any evil cats in the forest, she would say it was either Smokewhisker or Shadestar. She'd heard from Grasswhisker that Smokewhisker was only deputy because his father was Rabbitstar, the WindClan leader.

The dead cats from each Clan had been named, but for some reason, Troutstar didn't mention Breezetail. And the Great Oak was now called the Dead Oak.

"Hi, Salmonstorm!" Coldpaw greeted her as she arrived back at camp. "How was the Gathering?"

"Fine. The Great Oak is called the Dead Oak now and Crazypaw and Stonepaw returned to their Clans," she replied.

"Guess what?" Coldpaw asked.

"What?" Salmonstorm responded.

"My final assessment is tomorrow!" she exclaimed.

"Congratulations!" Salmonstorm purred.

***

Coldpaw passed it and was now known as Coldsnow. "That's a cool name," Hailcloud commented as he stood next to Salmonstorm in the crowd. "I've never known a warrior from any

Clan whose name ends with snow."

Salmonstorm nodded. "But Hailsnow or Salmonsnow doesn't sound quite as catchy as her name, wouldn't you agree?"

"Any name that belongs to you would be beautiful," he replied.

They stood up and headed towards the warriors den. Many cats were congratulating Coldsnow but one cat wasn't. This brown-and-white she-cat stomped angrily back to the apprentices den. Salmonstorm could hardly keep herself from laughing when she recalled the look on Aspenpaw's face when Troutstar had announced that she failed the assessment in front of the whole Clan. The apprentice had looked like she might jump up on the RiverTree and attempt to tear flame-colored she-cat to shreds.

The fact that she was intercepted by Marshcloud on her way back to her den probably didn't help lighten her bad mood. "Hey, Aspenpaw, congratulations on failing your final assessment!" he purred before trotting away.

"Even though she's never nice to anybody, I can't help but feel bad for her," Salmonstorm whispered to Hailcloud.

They continued walking towards the warriors den and Salmonstorm felt Hailcloud's warm breath on her ear. "Do you think you're still too young to love any cat?" he asked, mischief dancing in his green eyes.

The red-furred she-cat laughed. "Absolutely not," she answered.

"Do you love any cat in particular?" he hissed.

"I don't know," she responded, meeting his gaze. "Perhaps this one cat you might've heard of. His name is Hailcloud."

The brown tom chuckled. "Well, I think I've told you this before but I love you as well."

Chapter 24

Chapter 24

A half-moon had passed since the Gathering. Aspenpaw had passed her second assessment, which she took only three days ago, and was now known as Aspenleaf. Amberstorm's kits, Ravenpaw and Grasspaw, were apprentices, meaning Volekit and Thistlekit were the only kits in the nursery.

Salmonstorm was sharing a fish with Coldsnow in the shade of the RiverTree when Grasspaw suddenly appeared on the other side of the stream, fresh blood dripping down the right side of her face. "ShadowClan ambushed our patrol! Shadestar said that they wouldn't leave until we agreed to give them the Greenleaf Twolegplace and every bit of land all the way back to the Great Pine! Please help us!" she shouted.

The red-furred she-cat knew the patrol also included Silvershine, Owlfeather, Hollystorm, and Brightflame. "Salmonstorm, Blizzardfrost, Marshcloud, Flowerfur, Ripplecloud, Seedstorm, Mosspool, Reedsplash, Coldsnow, and Falconflight, come with me to defend our borders," Troutstar growled. "Grasspaw, stay here and let Leafwhisker and Rainpaw take care of you!"

Salmonstorm's friend was right beside her as the patrol raced out of camp to rescue their Clanmates. When they arrived, the ShadowClan cats most certainly outnumbered the RiverClan warriors, having at least three times as many cats. All of the cats fighting for her Clan were badly wounded and seemed relieved when they glimpsed Troutstar leading more warriors to help them. "RiverClan, attack!" she yowled, leaping into battle.

The opponent the RiverClan leader attacked was Shadestar. Salmonstorm tackled a young warrior named Brackenclaw while Coldsnow charged towards his sister, Ivywhisker, who was ShadowClan's deputy.

It was an easy battle for Salmonstorm, definitely much simpler than fighting Marshcloud or Flowerfur. *Because ShadowClan isn't as smart as us. ShadowClan is the dumbest, greediest Clan in the forest. Their battle moves most certainly won't be as complicated as those belonging to RiverClan!*

She soon had Brackenclaw pinned to the ground and raked her claws across his soft belly a few times. She then released him and watched him flee.

But Coldsnow wasn't having such an easy time with Ivywhisker. Apparently, the she-cat wasn't made deputy for nothing. Salmonstorm rushed over to help her friend and even Ivywhisker couldn't handle two opponents at once. The ShadowClan deputy eventually admitted defeat, casting one last look over her shoulder as she dashed away from the scene.

Shadestar looked frustrated as he watched the majority of his warriors leave as they were beaten by RiverClan. "ShadowClan, retreat!" he snarled at last.

Troutstar relaxed and nodded to her warriors. Salmonstorm understood that it meant to allow the ShadowClan cats to flee. "Remember me with this, though!" he laughed as he sliced his claws across a surprised Troutstar's throat.

The flame-colored she-cat collapsed to the ground and Shadestar hurried off before any RiverClan warriors could attack him. *She's only lost a life, I'm pretty certain it isn't her last. But how could Shadestar dare to do such a thing?* And another dead body laid on the ground. It was Salmonstorm's older brother, Ripplecloud.

***

When they returned to camp, they found most cats gathered around the nursery. "What's happening?" Salmonstorm asked Rainpaw.

Rainpaw hardly looked up as she carried a mouthful of herbs into the nursery. "Sandfur is kitting," she muttered.

“What?” Salmonstorm screeched. “It’s way too early!”

Rainpaw nodded. “Let’s beg StarClan that she’ll be okay.”

A/N: What do you think'll happen and what do you think the kits will be named(if they live that is >:D) Hope you enjoyed as always and please let me know what you think!

Oh and who should the next cat I do a Super Edition about be? It can be anyone mentioned in these three books as long as it isn't a ThunderClan cat! :)

Chapter 25

Chapter 25

Screeches of pain came from nursery. “She’s losing her strength!” Rainpaw squeaked to Leafwhisker from inside of the bramble thicket.

“I noticed,” the RiverClan medicine cat grumbled.

“Well, what are you going to do?” Rainpaw demanded.

“There’s nothing we can do,” Leafwhisker replied. “It’s in the paws of StarClan now.”

It was nighttime before the first kit arrived, a tiny flame-colored she-cat. “Will she be okay?” Salmonstorm asked nervously.

“The kit seems fine,” Rainpaw answered. “But honestly, I’m not sure if Sandfur will make it.”

The next one was a reddish-brown she-cat. “Tell Mosspool that I want the kits to be named Tawnykit and Cherrykit,” Sandfur groaned weakly.

And after that, her mother never spoke again. But meanwhile, Mosspool was sleeping in the warriors den, caring less than his Clanmates.

Salmonstorm felt sadness and anger rise up within her. She marched in through the entrance in the stone wall and raked her claws across his back to wake the deputy up. “What was that for?” Mosspool spat crossly.

“Do you even care that Sandfur is dead?” she hissed.

The black-furred tom didn’t even seem upset and he didn’t answer her question. “Are the kits okay?” he asked as he slowly rose to his feet and leisurely padded out of the den.

He casually stretched in the moonlight. Salmonstorm could hardly hide her fury. “Yes,” she growled. “Not that you’d care if they weren’t!”

Mosspool entered the nursery. The red-furred she-cat wanted to wail in grief as she glimpsed her mother’s lifeless body. “How will they be fed?” the RiverClan deputy wondered.

“I’ve agreed to take care of them,” Moonleaf, mother to Volekit and Thistlekit, who were two moons old, responded. “I’ve got plenty of milk to spare for now at least.”

“I think this one should be named Firekit,” Mosspool meowed, nodding to the flame-colored she-cat. “And Russetkit is…”

“Sandfur said she wanted the kits to be called Tawnykit and Cherrykit!” Rainpaw blurted out.

Mosspool wrinkled his nose. “Tawnykit? Neither of them are tawny-colored!” he commented.

“It’s my mother’s last wish,” Salmonstorm snarled. “You haven’t done anything for her except get her killed. Couldn’t you at least use the names she chose for her kits?”

Mosspool glared at her with light green eyes but she didn’t flinch away. “Fine, but when every cat says they’re dumb names, don’t say I didn’t tell you so,” he growled.

The light brown she-cat’s body was dragged out to the center of clearing and Salmonstorm went out to sit vigil. Hailcloud joined her. “Oh, Sandfur, I can’t believe you’re dead,” she whispered. “Now all of my family is dead except for me.”

“Do I count as family?” Hailcloud asked.

The red-furred she-cat shook her head. “Not in the same way,” she replied quietly.

“Well, Tawnykit and Cherrykit have to count! You have two new sisters!” he tried to comfort her. “And if I were you, I’d play with them whenever I could find the time.”

This lifted her spirits slightly. “Half-sisters,” she corrected him.

Hailcloud rolled his eyes and lowered his head. “Sandfur is with Foxkit and Breezetail in StarClan now,” he meowed. “She wouldn’t want you to be sad for very long. Actually, she probably wouldn’t want you to be sad at all.”

I wish I had a real sister, but Foxkit is dead. Maybe if I get them to like me as kits, they’ll feel like sisters when they’re older as warriors. Or perhaps they’ll just be close friends, like Coldsnow.

But when it was morning and she padded towards the warriors den to get some rest, she realized one thing that infuriated her. It was the fact that Mosspool had not come to sit vigil for Sandfur.

A/N: What do you think, my wonderful fans and readers? I've decided that my next Super Edition will be on Shadestar and I will announce the name in the next chapter! :) Also, I'll be going back to school tomorrow so I won't be able to update as often but I promise to try harder than last year! Believe me, I'm not going to make you wait a month for an update like I did with Crazystar's Battle, hopefully I won't even have to make you wait a week!

Anyhow, please comment and I hope you enjoyed the chapter(have I said this a billion times yet?)

Chapter 26

Chapter 26

The next night, she dreamt that she was in a forest. The trees had black bark and a gray mist was the only thing giving off light. In front of her stood her father, Breezetail.

Salmonstorm backed up instantly and unsheathed her claws. “What do you want and what are you doing invading my dreams?” she growled fiercely.

Breezetail sighed. “Oh, Salmonstorm, I’ve spoken to Foxkit and I’m so sorry. She helped me realize it wasn’t your fault that she died and I hope you accept my apology.”

“Why should I?” she snarled, feeling all of the anger she’d hidden rise up again.

“Perhaps you shouldn’t,” he admitted. “But I feel awful. It might not be enough to truly repay you, but I thought I’d give you extra training.”

“Why?” she demanded. “I’m a warrior, not an apprentice.”

“True, but you didn’t get much battle training and it never hurts to learn new moves and practice old moves,” Breezetail replied. “Besides, StarClan knows stuff that RiverClan has long since forgotten.”

“I won’t pass on the opportunity to increase my skills but I do have one question. Why is it so…dark here?” she asked, feeling her fury subside.

“Is the night sky dark, I ask you?” Breezetail answered. “If you think this place is bad, you should see the Dark Forest. Not only is it dark, but there’s no trees or river, it’s just a barren

wasteland."

His response made sense, but it left Salmonstorm feeling mildly disappointed. *This is StarClan?*

She'd always imagined StarClan as a beautiful place much like her current home in RiverClan with streams filled with endless fish. Or possibly like the valley where she'd spent six moons, except without the nearby Twolegplace. But not a dark, disgusting forest that supposedly had rivers…the word forest caught her attention but she didn't know why. She just sensed she was missing something important…

***

It was now a cold leaf-bare and was the first one Salmonstorm had seen. It had been early in newleaf when she was born and the white, powdery substance covering the ground when she woke up one morning surprised her. Fortunately, the river hadn't frozen yet, although the elders promised it would soon.

Tawnykit and her sister were soon ready to become apprentices. Moonleaf had nursed them for a while but once she was out of milk, Bluesplash had returned to the nursery and agreed to take care of them until they could eat fresh-kill. The bluish-gray she-cat had two kits named Sunkit and Ripplekit. Salmonstorm played with them frequently while they were younger, and now they were six moons old. And the best news of all? Troutstar had chosen her to mentor Tawnykit!

***

Moons passed. Ravenpaw and Grasspaw were now Ravenfire and Grassfoot. Leaf-bare went by quickly and newleaf was almost over. An epidemic of greencough spread through the camp, taking four victims with it. Sparkle, Grasswhisker, and Blizzardfrost would be missed but the other cat was Troutstar, who'd fallen ill before anyone else. At least, the flame-colored leader had more lives remaining. And luckily, Salmonstorm was not among those who had caught the potentially fatal sickness.

Finally, after long moons of training, Tawnypaw and Cherrypaw were ready to become warriors!

“Tawnypaw was a good fighter,” Hailcloud, who was Cherrypaw’s mentor, commented.

“Yes, but Cherrypaw did better on hunting and they’re both quick learners,” Salmonstorm meowed.

Hailcloud nodded as Troutstar yowled, “Let all cats old enough to catch their own prey gather beneath the Highledge for a Clan meeting!”

“I, Troutstar, leader of RiverClan, call upon my warrior ancestors to look down on these two apprentices. They have trained hard to understand the ways of your noble code, and I commend them to you as warriors in their turn. Cherrypaw, Tawnypaw, do you promise to uphold the warrior code and to protect and defend this Clan, even at the cost of your life?” the RiverClan leader started the ceremony.

“I do!” Tawnypaw declared loudly while Cherrypaw responded in a voice that was barely more than a whisper.

“Then by the powers of StarClan, I give you your warrior names,” Troutstar continued. “Cherrypaw, you and your sister have both proven that you will make great warriors. From this moment on, you will be known as Cherrystorm. StarClan honors your courage and loyalty, and we welcome you as a full warrior of RiverClan.”

“Tawnypaw,” the RiverClan leader spoke Salmonstorm’s apprentice’s name. “You are eager to learn and a fine hunter. From now on, you will be known as Tawnyflame. StarClan honors your intelligence and skill and we welcome you as a full warrior of our Clan.”

The Clan chanted their names and Salmonstorm was almost as proud as Tawnyflame.

A/N: I've been super busy plus I started a new Percy Jackson

story this weekend, so I apologize for the wait but here's the next chapter!

That's how Salmonstar got stuck in the Place of No Stars. Anyone notice something about Breezetail's explanation that didn't make sense? Like the fact that if it's the Dark "Forest" it wouldn't be logical that there'd be no trees :D

Anyhow thanks for reading, hope you enjoyed, and please comment so I know what you think :D

Chapter 27

Chapter 27

"ThunderClan is late," Coldsnow commented.

"I know," Salmonstorm muttered. "It isn't like Cloudstar to be the last one to a Gathering."

"There's ThunderClan!" Kestrelfeather of WindClan announced as she finished her sentence.

To everybody's surprise, the cat that leapt onto the Dead Oak wasn't the white-furred leader, nor was it the gray-and-white tom, Splashheart, who was ThunderClan's deputy. It was a familiar light gray she-cat who Salmonstorm had heard about once or twice in Cloudstar's reports but hadn't seen since she'd returned to her Clan. *Crazyflame! What is she doing up there?*

Apparently, other cats were having the same thoughts. Whispers spread between warriors as quickly as wildfire, but they were silenced by a loud yowl from Troutstar. The flame-colored leader nodded encouragingly to the gray-furred she-cat, who looked incredibly nervous. "Um…" the ThunderClan she-cat began. "ThunderClan has been struck by tragedy. Splashheart has killed Cloudstar and if anyone sees him, it would be wise to show no mercy to him. He deserves to be punished for what he's done. He's a heartless rogue who has no understanding of the warrior code. Also, we found a WindClan warrior trespassing on our territory…"

Crazystar was immediately interrupted by yowls of protest from WindClan. Rabbitstar glared at her, his eyes smoldering with anger. "Let me finish!" she snarled with frustration. "This trespasser claimed that he had come to join our Clan and we allowed him to. So far at least, he hasn't broken our trust but if he is a spy you sent, Rabbitstar, don't think at all that ThunderClan isn't watching his every move closely."

Rabbitstar looked insulted and surprised. “Who is this cat?” he growled. “What is his name?”

“He calls himself Stonestream,” Crazystar replied.

Salmonstorm gasped in surprise as she began to suspect why Stonestream had joined ThunderClan. Coldsnow gave her a strange look. “What’s wrong?” her friend asked.

Salmonstorm shook her head and pushed away the thought. *It isn’t my business.* “Nothing,” she lied, and tried to focus on the leaders’ words.

“You captured him!” Smokewhisker shouted accusingly.

“No, we did not,” Crazystar sighed. “Supposedly he joined because you mistreated him.”

Smokewhisker didn’t respond. “RiverClan doesn’t have much to report. We have two new warriors, Cherrystorm and Tawnyflame,” Troutstar announced.

Shadestar was next. “RiverClan has been trespassing on our land!” the ShadowClan leader declared.

“What? Shut up, you mangy old furball!” Salmonstorm joined the rest of her Clanmates in denying the ShadowClan leader’s claims.

“Stop trying to cause trouble, Shadestar!” Troutstar yowled.

“I’m telling the truth. I advise you to heed my warning which is that RiverClan will pay for this offense,” the ShadowClan leader growled.

***

Salmonstorm was on the extra-large dawn patrol being led by Troutstar to the ShadowClan border. It consisted of Tawnyflame, Mosspool, Brightflame, Flowerfur, Ravenfire, Thistlefrost, Volestorm, Icewhisker, Hailcloud, Aspenleaf,

Puddlesplash, and Ripplecloud.

Sure enough, waiting at the ShadowClan border for them was Shadestar with a patrol of his own that was about the same size. The black-furred tom's eyes were cold and menacing. "Same as last time," the ShadowClan leader meowed. "Surrender the stretch of territory from here to the Great Pine or we'll take it by force."

"Why do you do this, Shadestar? Why do you need territory you wouldn't even use?" Troutstar asked.

Shadestar's eyes narrowed even further. "I've been waiting all these seasons for revenge, Troutstar. You couldn't respect my mother so I have no respect for you or your Clan. I will not rest until I've made you suffer the way you made me suffer," the ShadowClan leader replied, the fury evident in his voice.

Salmonstorm could tell that for once, the ShadowClan leader wasn't making up a story just to cause an argument. And it led her to wonder what Troutstar had done and if maybe there was a reason behind Shadestar's unfriendly attitude towards the other Clans.

The red-furred she-cat looked at her leader and attempted the read Troutstar's expression. But the flame-colored she-cat looked genuinely confused. "What in StarClan's name are you talking about?" she growled.

"You should know," Shadestar responded. "I haven't forgotten and I don't believe you truly have either."

"I have no idea about anything other than the fact that you are a worthless mouse-brain!" Troutstar snarled ferociously.

"I'll remember that insult as well," Shadestar hissed. "Now will you make a wise choice or will you all perish fighting us?"

"RiverClan would never give you of all cats our territory nor would we lose to your incompetent warriors," the flame-colored leader replied.

The ShadowClan cats instantly attacked. Salmonstorm stumbled away from the battle after Ivywhisker snuck up behind her and dealt a bad blow to her left shoulder.

RiverClan managed to defeat the ShadowClan warriors but not until both sides had received multiple injuries. Three unmoving bodies laid on the ground; Ripplecloud, Mosspool, and Troutstar.

A/N: Troutstar isn't dead. She has one more life left.

Three things I forgot to mention last chapter. Volekit and Thistlekit were warriors when Tawnyflame and Cherrystorm received their warrior names. They're called Volestorm and Thistlefrost.

Rainpaw has her full medicine cat name. She's called Rainpool.

And I was supposed to announce the name of the Shadestar Super Edition. It'll be called Shadestar's Agony.

Anyhow, hope you enjoyed and I've given you all the first glimpse into Shadestar's Agony with that conversation between Troutstar and Shadestar.

Chapter 28

Chapter 28

Rain poured from the sky. It was very close to moonhigh when Troutstar leapt onto the RiverTree and summoned the Clan. Salmonstorm came with Coldsnow at her side, waiting expectantly to hear the new deputy. “Mosspool has been her deputy since I was a kit,” Coldsnow commented.

Salmonstorm nodded. “I wonder who will replace him,” she meowed.

“Perhaps Rosethorn, Reedsplash or one of the other senior warriors,” Coldsnow suggested.

“We all mourn the loss of Mosspool…” Troutstar began.

“Not all of us,” Salmonstorm muttered and Coldsnow was barely able to stifle a laugh.

“He was a brave warrior who died a noble death defending our territory from ShadowClan,” the RiverClan leader continued. “But it is now quickly approaching moonhigh and according to the traditions of our ancestors, I must make the difficult decision of appointing a new deputy.”

At that moment, a beam of moonlight pierced through the clouds above and briefly illuminated the camp. At the middle of the island, Mosspool’s unmoving body laid on the grass. His black fur shone a dark gray and he looked like he was just sleeping, other than the fact that he wasn’t breathing.

“I say these words before StarClan and the spirit of Mosspool, that they may hear and approve of my choice,” Troutstar sighed.

The flame-colored she-cat took a shaky breath. Her eyes

scanned the crowd and they stopped on Salmonstorm. “The new deputy of RiverClan will be Salmonstorm.”

Salmonstorm was shocked and didn’t know what to say. *I wasn’t expecting this at all! Why did she choose me?*

“T-thank you, Troutstar,” she stammered at last. “I promise to try to my best.”

***

Salmonstorm had been deputy for six moons. Coldsnow and Marshcloud had kits who had just become apprentices; Sunpaw and Ripplepaw. “Why hello, my beautiful deputy,” Icewhisker purred as he casually walked up to her.

“Hey,” she sighed.

“I noticed you’ve been spending a lot of time with Hailcloud lately,” he meowed, a hint of sadness in his voice.

“So?” she hissed, instantly annoyed.

“I think maybe you should get to know me a little better,” he responded. “Want to go hunting? I bet you’ll catch more fish than me.”

Why not? Just because I go hunting with Icewhisker doesn’t mean I don’t love Hailcloud.

“Sure,” she answered.

Over the next half-moon, Icewhisker asked her to go hunting almost as often as Hailcloud. She found that she was constantly wishing it was Hailcloud beside her instead of her former mentor…

One day, when Icewhisker and Salmonstorm returned from hunting, they found the majority of the Clan gathered around a body in the center of camp.

Salmonstorm rushed over. “Troutstar!” she wailed.

***

Won't Icewhisker get offended if I choose Hailcloud as my deputy? No, I remember him saying he wouldn't want to be a deputy like me and that he wanted to be a regular warrior because he didn't want so many responsibilities…

Oh, great StarClan, I can't believe I'm leader!

Salmonstorm walked out of the leader's den, which felt so empty and still contained Troutstar's scent. She gathered the Clan and made the announcement. "I say these words before StarClan and the spirit of Troutstar, that they may hear and approve of my choice. The new deputy of RiverClan will be Hailcloud."

A/N: I'm so happy! Salmonstorm is finally leader! There should only be 1-3 more chapters and an epilogue and then we're on to the story of Shadestar's life…because sadly, Salmonstar dies shortly after she becomes leader as you read in the prologue :(Anyhow, hope you enjoyed and are as excited for Shadestar's Agony as I am!

Chapter 29

Chapter 29

Salmonstar had been leader for three moons. She'd discovered that Breezetail was actually a member of the Dark Forest and that he'd tricked her into believing the Place of No Stars was StarClan. Thankfully, Cloudstar had led a patrol to rescue her.

At the previous Gathering, Crazystar had given her the answer to the question she'd been wondering for moons. *Why did Breezetail train me?*

The Dark Forest was rising and training cats from the Clans so they could take over. They were being led by ThunderClan's former deputy, Splashheart.

The red-furred she-cat was sharing a fish with Hailcloud one day. "Um, Hailcloud, I have something to tell you," Salmonstar meowed.

Hailcloud raised an eyebrow. "Yes, what is it?" he asked.

"Well, I...I'm expecting your kits," she stammered.

"That's awesome!" he purred. "We'll give them the coolest names ever! Can we name one of them Minnowkit?"

"Sure," she replied, pleased to see that he was excited about it. "That's so cute!"

***

Yesterday, one of RiverClan's patrols had noticed ShadowClan scent over the border. So Salmonstar was leading a patrol consisting of Hailcloud, Marshcloud, Sunblaze, Ripplepool, Ravenfire, Silvershine, Falconflight, Owlfeather, Frostcloud, Bluesplash, and Yellowfire.

Waiting at the ShadowClan border was the arrogant Shadestar with

a patrol of his own. "Oh, Salmonstar, ShadowClan is stronger than ever before. Don't make the same mistakes as Troutstar. Surrender the territory back to the Great Pine or you'll be destroyed along with the rest of your Clanmates," the ShadowClan leader growled.

RiverClan cannot afford to keep fighting these costly battles with ShadowClan every other moon. Shadestar must be killed or we will never know peace.

"Troutstar didn't make a mistake," Salmonstar snarled. "We've won each time in case you don't remember! It is time to put an end to this! RiverClan, attack!

The red-furred she-cat leapt towards Shadestar, who easily sidestepped. He swung a paw towards her head, but she ducked under his strike and swept his forepaws out from under him. She aimed a blow for his neck, but he rolled out of the way. "Have any moves better than that, kit?" he taunted her as he scrambled back to his feet.

"Shut up," she muttered, slicing her claws across Shadestar's nose before he could dodge.

Salmonstar hopped backwards as he tried to rake his claws across her neck and then lunged towards him. Her weight managed to knock him over and Shadestar was soon pinned on the ground. He unsuccessfully tried to throw her off. "You were never going to beat RiverClan and you should've known that," the red-furred she-cat hissed.

Without hesitating, Salmonstar delivered the death blow. "NO! Shadestar!" Ivywhisker, the ShadowClan deputy, howled. "That was his last life! How dare you?"

"I did not know it was his last life but even if this hadn't been his ninth, I would've made certain that I took the rest of them," Salmonstar responded. "I cannot allow these constant battles between our Clans to continue. I hope you will be a kinder leader than Shadestar, Ivywhisker."

Ivywhisker glared at her. "ShadowClan, retreat!" she yowled.

As the ShadowClan warriors fled from the scene, Salmonstar noticed the cat lying on the grass with a large wound in his throat. The one cat that meant more to her than anything else. "No!" she screamed.

Hailcloud turned his head weakly to look at her. "Everyone, return to camp. Please give us some time alone to say...to say good-bye," she ordered, her voice trembling.

Salmonstar rushed over to his side as the Clan left. "Oh, Hailcloud, please don't die. The Clan needs you. I need you," she meowed.

"I will watch you and our kits from StarClan. Oh, our kits will be beautiful," he coughed. "About the kits...no one knows about them yet except you, me, Leafwhisker, and Rainpool, right?"

Salmonstar nodded, not understanding why he was asking. "Icewhisker will be heartbroken if he realizes you love me and not him. Since I will be gone...can you do me one last favor?" he managed to gasp out, his voice rapidly growing weaker and the light fading out of those beautiful green eyes. "Tell Icewhisker that they're his kits. It's...it's for the best."

"I'd do anything for you," she replied, her voice faltering.

He closed his eyes. "Thank you," he breathed. "Minnowkit...perfect name..."

Hailcloud stopped speaking. His breathing halted.

NO!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

A/N: Hailcloud was one of my favorite characters :(But it had to happen...

I bet none of you were expecting Hailcloud to be the father because of what the prologue said about Icewhisker being the father. But it also said:

"He's a good father," Tawnyflame commented.

Salmonstar nodded, *ONLY PARTLY LISTENING TO WHAT*

TAWNYFLAME WAS SAYING.

It's official, the next chapter of this book will be the last one other than the epilogue! So excited for book 4!

Epilogue

Epilogue

Who could I possibly choose to replace Hailcloud? Perhaps one of the senior warriors, like Yellowfire, Falconflight, or Eaglefeather…

Salmonstar was sitting in the center of the camp beside Hailcloud's lifeless body as the sun was setting on the horizon. She saw Leafwhisker talking to Rainpool and rose to her feet. "Hi, Leafwhisker," she meowed before giving a brief nod to Rainpool. "I have no idea who to choose for deputy. Icewhisker doesn't want to be deputy so he's not an option to replace his brother. Could you try to ask StarClan for me? Please?"

Leafwhisker hesitated. "Yes, but after that, if StarClan doesn't answer, you'll have to make a quick choice. I suggest you have a cat in mind until I return," he replied before padding into his den.

It was nearly moonhigh when Leafwhisker returned. *If he hasn't heard anything, I'll choose Falconflight.* "Did they send you a message?" Salmonstar asked nervously.

Leafwhisker nodded quickly. "I saw a tawny-colored cat inside of a blazing fire," he answered.

"What is that supposed to mean? There are no tawny-colored cats in RiverClan so…" she paused as she finally understood what StarClan were trying to say. "Tawnyflame? No way! Her apprentice, Sunblaze, only just became a warrior! And she's so young!"

"You asked me to speak with StarClan. I am only sharing with you what they shared with me," Leafwhisker responded.

I suppose I can't ignore my ancestors, although I'm doubtful

that picking Tawnyflame is the best choice. Also, I must announce that I am supposedly having Icewhisker's kits…but I don't want to lie to him, especially not in front of the whole Clan. But it must be done because it was Hailcloud's last wish and I promised him I would. I know he's watching and refuse to disappoint him.

Salmonstar climbed onto the RiverTree. She wasn't used to this view of camp yet. She could see everything, and instantly noticed that at least half of the Clan were already waiting for her decision. "Let all cats old enough to catch their own prey gather beneath the RiverTree for a Clan meeting!" she yowled.

"I say these words before StarClan and the spirit of Hailcloud, that they may hear and approve of my choice. Tawnyflame will be the new deputy of RiverClan!" Salmonstar declared.

All heads turned to the flame-colored she-cat, who appeared to be in shock. "Thank you, although I have no idea why I was chosen," she managed after a long silence.

A few cats hesitantly began to chant her name and soon the whole Clan joined in. "Tawnyflame! Tawnyflame!"

"Also, I have more news to announce. I am expecting Icewhisker's kits sometime soon, and I assure you that this is as much of a surprise for him as it was for you," she meowed.

Icewhisker looked so pleased, that it was *almost* worth deceiving her whole Clan…

I hope you're happy, Hailcloud, if you even care anymore now that you're with StarClan…

***

Two she-cats and a tom. That's how many kits she had. Three beautiful, wonderful kits. Icewhisker entered the den. "The silver she-cat is adorable! How about we name her Bright…" he began.

"No!" Salmonstar snarled. "Her name will be Minnowkit!"

Icewhisker flinched backwards. "Okay, sorry!" he muttered. "Well then, can we name that dark gray tom Pebblekit?"

"Sure," she sighed, reluctant to let a cat who wasn't their father name any of her kits. "Can we name the reddish-brown she-cat Willowkit?"

"Okay, I don't mind that name," Icewhisker responded cheerfully. "They're almost as beautiful as you! I'm so glad that I can be the father of such wonderful kits that belong to a she-cat that's as gorgeous and perfect as you!"

If only you knew the truth…

A/N: I was going to have a Chapter 30 before the epilogue but it was too short :) I hope you enjoyed this book and will enjoy the next one just as much! The allegiances, book cover, and author's note will be posted with the next 15 minutes. Please comment and if you're interested, check out my Shadestar Super Edition once it's posted! :D Thanks x infinity for reading, you all are awesome!